FACING DANGER

FRANCIS J. FINN, S.J.

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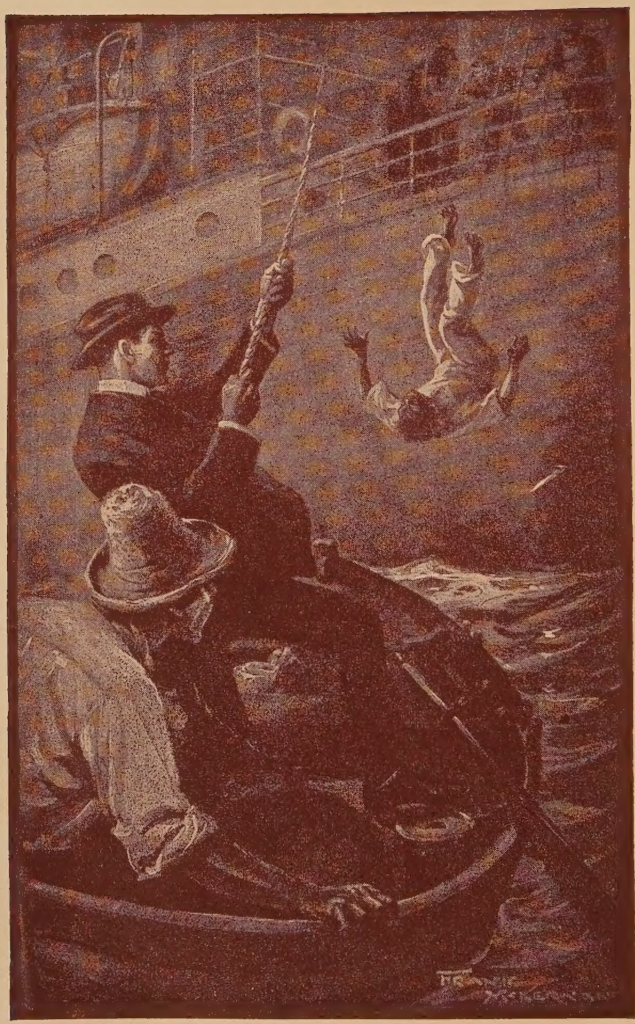

"He had just caught the rope in his hands when down from above dropped the form of a man."—Page 132.

FACING DANGER

BY

FRANCIS J. FINN, S.J.

Author of "Percy Wynn," "Tom Playfair," "Harry Dee," etc.

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FACING DANGER

CHAPTER I

A CHANCE MEETING

THERE are several wonderful streets in the United States. New York has Broadway with its famous white lights; Chicago, which is nothing if not big, has Halsted Street, the longest, or, as a Chicagoan would say, the "biggest" street in the world. But most wonderful of all is Canal Street, the sunny, the wide, the gay — Canal Street in New Orleans.

Such was the opinion of a roguish-eyed, handsome, dark-complexioned young man as he sauntered along one sunny day in the opening year of the twentieth century. He was slightly above middle height, stockily built, and, by way of contrast to the men, women and children who passed him by, clothed in rather severe black. His dress was the dress of a cleric; his face that of one who had grown into manhood but remained nevertheless a boy.

Canal Street is the great procession ground of the United States. Everybody seems to be there on parade; and nearly everybody is attired in

smiling white; and everybody is bathed in dazzling New Orleans sunshine. The shops, like the season, are gay; the people, like the season, are bland. It is a street of joy.

The young man was sauntering. He was observing, drinking in greedily the sunshine, the gaiety. Little boys and little girls, nearly all of them attired angelically, when they happened to meet his gaze casually, out of hand arrested their glances and grew interested in his dark, handsome features. Invariably they broke into the sweet, innocent smile which is the prerogative of youth. And the young man had an intriguing way of winning these smiles. He didn't wink exactly, but he came so near to accomplishing this frivolous feat that a person casually observing him would have said that he did.

"Upon my word," he reflected, as he dexterously ducked his way through a crowd who seemed to occupy the entire width of the sidewalk, "if I had a long-lost brother and really wanted to find him, I'd come right here and camp on Canal Street; and I'm sure he'd come along some day. This is the street for the lost and found of the world."

He was about to indulge in further reflections, when the current of his thought was broken by the carelessness of a white-slippered, white-socked, white-robed, bare-legged girl of twelve. Carrying a heavy package of groceries in one hand, a toy balloon in the other, she was performing for her own delight a step which apparently belonged to a French folk-dance. There

were difficulties in the way. There were the groceries and the balloon: but she was equal to these. There was a crowded walk. Even so, she did wonderfully well at the start. There was our cheerful young man, who, absorbed in the thought of looking for a non-existent brother on this particular street, ceased sauntering and paused. Well, Canal Street is not intended for pausing anyhow, and so it came to pass that the little fairy, whose eyes had taken in every one in front and behind her with a view to getting in nobody's road, brought a slippered foot in sharp contact with the man's right knee, and tumbled upon the pavement. The groceries fell from one hand, the string of the balloon slipped from the other. The man for a moment lost his balance; and, as he regained it, jumped into the air just in time to catch the string. His next movement was to reach down, and bring the child to her feet and restore her packages. All of this happened much more quickly than it takes to record; and during the entire proceedings the man's face was wreathed in smiles. Not so his aggressor. Her pretty little face, the face of a typical Creole, was alive with dismay as she seated herself unpremeditatedly on the side-walk; it changed to horror as the groceries slipped from her arm, and two quick tears and a gasp of dismay followed hard upon the escape of the balloon. As the man leaped into the air, for all the world, to her quick, black eyes, like a circus performer, the horror dropped from her features like a mask, the tears, as she was helped to her feet, were dismissed with a quick gesture;

and the face that raised itself in gratitude to her preserver, smiled as though its owner were getting her first view of Paradise.

"Oh, sir, I thank you. And you will excuse me for jolting into you. Oh, thank you, thank you. You are so quick. I like you much. I am going to give you —"

"Hold on," interrupted the young man as the miss began making speedy arrangements to open one of the packages. "I'm not hungry. But, if you don't mind, I'd like you to teach me that dance."

"Come with me," she cried. "Come to my home, and I will teach you many."

As she fixed her eager eyes upon her new friend, she saw in his a twinkle that could not be misunderstood.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "you are a joker."

"But not a knave," he replied. This joke was lost upon her. Nevertheless, she saw that something funny was intended and broke into a silvery laugh. And with that laugh still ringing on the sun-charmed air, she danced away waving her balloon in a fond adieu.

If the man, who, remember, had once been a boy and never got over it, pursued his way looking almost beatific, there is little cause for wonder. To such as he, little children are the most engaging things in the world.

Suddenly the vision of heaven left his face. A look of concern succeeded it. In front of a candy store, the show-window of which was an exhibit of sweets arranged with an art sufficient to drive a penniless and contemplative child to

distraction, stood a boy of about ten, whose features were a revelation of despair.

The boy's face was foreign. It was tropical. His features were just irregular enough to be interesting. In the abandonment of grief, tears had put a mist over his eyes, wrinkles had given an additional turn to his tip-tilted nose, and his small feet were turned in beyond what one would expect from an Indian runner. He had just turned from a contemplation of the fairy-like show-window, and, taking from his white coat a very small handkerchief blew his nose violently, rubbed his eyes fiercely, and, to the no small astonishment of our saunterer, suddenly threw himself down, and proceeded incontinently to beat a savage tattoo with his feet.

Suddenly he was helped to a standing posture. A strong hand had taken him by the neck. The boy's face grew black with anger. He turned blazing eyes upon the one who had thus dared to take liberties.

"What you want?" he cried, gazing into the calm, unruffled but friendly face of our young man.

"I don't want anything. But I think you do. Won't you come in and take some candy?"

The lad fixed a fierce gaze upon his questioner, turned the same gaze which lost something of its fierceness and took on something of longing upon the alluring show-window, and brought it back to his new companion. Then, heaving a sigh, the boy, more in sorrow than in anger, spoke:

"I want to go home. I am sick of the States.

I hate gringoes. I am hungry. I am lost. I will not stay in this country. The American boys make foolish with me. I am hungry."

"Come right in," cried the young man, catching the boy's hand, "you'll not be hungry long."

And as our young man escorted the tempest-tossed lad into the candy store, he smiled genially, feeling assured that he was going to settle the boy's difficulties in a few minutes. Perhaps he would not have been so gay and *débonnaire,* on this particular occasion, had he known that this chance meeting was to give him two weeks of the most thrilling adventures of his life.

CHAPTER II

THE LOVES AND HATES OF A BLUE-BLOODED YOUNG ARISTOCRAT OF SOUTH AMERICA

"THEY'VE sandwiches here, I observe," began the young man, as they seated themselves at a marble-topped table. "Perhaps you'd like a few of them."

"I like ice-cream," suggested the youth, curling his nose in thought.

"And cake?"

"Oh, very much. That cake I see in the glass that is stuffed inside with fluid."

"Oh, you mean cream-cake."

The boy was now smiling. His distress was gone, and he raised eyes of interest upon his companion who was now giving the order.

"My name," he said, "is Jose Maria Escobal."

"You may call me Herr Professor."

"Herr?" echoed the boy. "You are not a her, you are a him."

"This Herr," responded the Professor, "is not the sort of a her you're thinking about. It is a title of honor. You see, I'm a sort of professor. And if you're real good, I'll tell you my name some day."

Jose Maria arose, and drew himself up like a prince.

"Herr Professor," he said, "I am full with

joy to make your acquisition." This remarkable and dignified statement he emphasized with a bow.

"Delighted to meet you, Jose Maria," answered the Professor, rising in turn and catching the boy's hand. "I see plainly you are not an American."

Jose Maria's face suddenly darkened; he threw out two clasped fists of abjuration, and had just opened his mouth to enter upon a hot disclaimer of being anything remotely American, when the waitress set down upon the table a heaping dish of ice-cream and two golden cream-cakes, whereupon, forgetting all else, he suddenly seated himself and devoted his energies to the things before him.

One cream-cake was gone with half of the ice-cream when he paused momentarily.

"How did you know I was hungry?" he asked.

"I was a boy myself once," the Professor made answer. "And when I was a boy, I was always hungry."

This explanation was entirely satisfactory to Jose Maria. He started in with new zest.

"I say," observed the elder after a decent interval. "Jose Maria takes a long time to say. Would you mind if I called you Joe?"

Jose Maria stopped eating. Fixing calm, earnest dark eyes upon the Professor, rising to his feet, pushing forward his hands breast high and palms outward, he said in tragic tones, "Neveure."

Then he sat down again and started in as though he were just beginning.

When the Professor ordered another ice-cream and two more cream-cakes, Jose Maria uncurled his nose, raised friendly eyes and chuckled.

"My father," he remarked when he had made a clean job of the first round of cream and cake, "is very rich man. He is much learned. He is President of the Republic of Escadilla in South America. He will reward you very much."

"Reward me for what?"

"For taking care of me; from prevent me to starve."

"You must have very noble blood in your veins," remarked the Professor playfully.

"Oh, very blue-blood. Very, very blue." Jose Maria as he spoke raised his head on high and puffed out his chest.

"'Kind hearts are more than coronets,'" quoted the Professor.

"Hey! what is that?"

"'And simple faith than Norman blood.'"

"I comprehend not," said Jose Maria, wrinkling his nose.

The Professor was gravely endeavoring to interpret the Tennyson couplet to the haughty young aristocrat, when the fresh consignment arrived. And that ended the explanation.

There was a long silence.

"Don't mind me," said the Professor.

"I do not," answered Jose Maria between mouthfuls.

"Just go along and enjoy yourself," continued the bland young man.

"I enjoy myself very much," the youth deigned

to remark without raising his eyes. Nor did he raise them till his ice-cream dish was to outward seeming absolutely clean.

Then Jose Maria's face became wistful.

"Anything else you'd like, Jose Maria?"

"I think," Jose Maria made earnest answer, "that I would now like a piece of 'am surrounded on both sides by bread."

"Oh, sandwiches, you mean?"

"Yes; one, two sandwich."

Herr Professor looked troubled. He felt furtively in his vest pockets, then in those of his coat and finally of his trousers. Evidently he discovered an extra coin or two in his search; for his face cleared.

"You are a poor man?" queried Jose Maria.

"Well, I'm not a bloated bond-holder," returned the Professor after he had ordered three sandwiches.

"Say that slow, Herr Professor."

By the time he had made clear to the inquisitive youth the meaning of "bloated bond-holder" the sandwiches arrived, whereupon Jose Maria lost interest in any further information.

"Jose Maria," inquired the Professor as the lad bit earnestly into the last sandwich, "are your legs by any chance hollow?"

"My legs," the youth made answer, "are most sturdy."

"Then you'll blow up in a minute."

"Do not make foolish with me," warned the youth sternly.

"Now," continued the blue-blooded South American as he wiped his mouth with a napkin,

"I think I could perhaps take one more of those —what is it you call them?"

"Sandwiches?"

"No."

"Cream-cakes?"

"Yes; cream-cakes."

"Let's see," said the Professor. "You've had three sandwiches, four cream-cakes, two heaping dishes of ice-cream. Don't you think you've had enough?"

"Yes; but it would give me joy to devour one more cream-cake."

"It might give you something else beside joy, if your stomach is anything like an American's."

"It is not," answered Jose Maria indignantly. "If it were American, I would destroy it."

"Well, anyhow, you can wait."

"Please — now," pleaded Jose Maria.

"The fact is," said the Professor, smiling as though he were communicating the most delightful of news, "I'm broke."

"Where?" queried the lad, scanning him from top to toe.

"Dead broke," continued the smiler.

"Dead! Broke! You are not dead. Nor can I see that you are broke."

"In other words, I have just enough money with me to pay for what you have already eaten."

"Oh, you are very poor. Behold!" here Jose Maria waved for several seconds the forefinger of his right hand impressively just below his shirt-collar. Then he resumed: "My father will hire you."

"Oh, thank you so much. Chicle-gathering, I suppose."

"No — no."

"Mahogany-logging?"

"No — no."

"Secretary of State?"

"You joke. No; he will hire you out as my tutor."

"O joy! O rapture!" ejaculated the Professor. He was about to continue his remarks in a similar strain of exultation, when the sudden change in the boy's countenance brought him to a pause. Jose Maria's nose had suddenly wrinkled, his jaw had fallen, his eyes had filled; despair spread over his features.

"Why, what's the matter, my boy?"

"Oh! Oh!" cried Jose Maria; and then he bawled outright.

For a second the Herr Professor was at a loss. Then he dived into his coat pocket, brought out a chocolate caramel and slipped it into the lad's wide open mouth.

"Now shut your mouth on that."

The bawling ceased.

"And what's the trouble, boy?"

"I — I'm losted."

"Lost?"

"Yes, losted. This morning I arrived in New Orleans with my tutor."

"Your tutor? What have you done with him?"

"He got sick on the train — very sick in his insides. And he keep sick insides. We take

a machine to a big hotel. And then he at once get sick outside, too."

"How's that? Sick outside? Do you mean smallpox?"

"No, no; his head make much heat. I put my hand on his brow. It feel like hell — hey, what make you laugh?"

"Beg pardon. I'm sure you don't intend to be profane; but we don't use the phrase 'like hell' unless we really don't mind what we're saying."

"I see what you mean. I feel his head, and it is hot like a stove. He give me money to go out and get a prescription at a drug store. I go out and I promenade the street. And there come along soldiers with guns. They are going to fight my brothers the Spaniards, and I follow them and stick out my tongue and say words of contempt."

"Well!" gasped the Professor.

"And — and — a man in a blue coat with buttons like gold and short stick came after me."

"It was a policeman."

"A policeman? Why a man near me, said, 'There's a cop coming, Johnnie; scoot.'"

"Cop," observed the Professor, "is American for policeman."

"Then I will say cop never."

"And did you scoot?"

"No; I ran. And I ran and ran till I could not keep my mouth shut, and then I was losted. And the money was losted and the prescription too. And I did not have any breakfast."

The Professor looked at his watch. It was a quarter past eleven.

"What is the name of that hotel?"

"I know not."

"Didn't you hear the name of it?"

"I did; but I have forgot."

"Come," said the Professor, rising. "This may be serious."

Catching the boy's hand, he hurried to a telephone book, and found the list of hotels.

"Listen, Jose Maria; I will read the names of the hotels. If you hear the right one, let me know."

He read name after name till he came to the Regis.

"Ai! that is it. You very smart man."

"So I've been told. Say, it's only two squares or so away. We'll be there in a minute. Come on."

Before leaving, the Professor paid the noble youth's bill. He still had a nickel and two pennies.

"What's the name of your tutor?"

"Professor Antonio Gomez."

"One moment." The Professor entered the telephone-booth, called up the hotel and gave orders to have a physician visit the tutor at once. Assured that the matter would receive immediate attention, he came out with two cents. These he exchanged for caramels.

"You are very kind man," observed Jose Maria, putting all three of them into his mouth.

A moment later they were passing Baronne Street.

"Look you, Jose Maria, there's a wonderful

church here, just a few feet away. Your tutor, I fear, is a very sick man. Suppose we go in and say a little prayer for him."

"I like it," answered Jose Maria. "My father, he great man, he will beyond the shadow of a suspicion hire you."

They were now in front of the Church of the Immaculate Conception. One step, a second, and they were in. There were so many people scattered throughout the interior that one would think that some service was about to be held. It is always that way in the famous old church of Baronne Street.

To do Jose Maria justice, he made an elaborate sign of the cross, clasped his hands, closed his eyes and moved his lips in earnest prayer. He showed no curiosity as to the odd and attractive Moorish interior.

"I made one prayer for the tutor," he remarked as they went out, "and one that my father, the President of the Republic of Escadilla, may hire you for me."

"Thank you, Jose Maria. If ever I build a church, it will be like that one. Did you see the throng of people there? I'm told it's that way all the time. And the reason is that the Church of the Immaculate Conception on Baronne Street is just as easy to get into as a department store."

"When I become a man," said the lad, "I will put up a church like that — maybe five or six. I like it much."

"I prefer it," added the Professor, "to any Jesuit Church in the United States."

If the Professor had shot off a pistol at the ear of his tiny companion, he could hardly have produced a more striking effect.

"Jesuit! Jesuit!" cried the lad. "That church Jesuit."

"Certainly; the Jesuits are all right."

"You are American!" cried the lad loftily. "What should Americans know of the Catholic Church? The Jesuits are bad; they are devils. I hate them. I will build no such church."

"Well! well!" gasped the other.

"When you accost my father, a most learned man, he will tell you about the Jesuits."

"But unfortunately, Jose Maria, I'm not just now open to an engagement. I sail to-morrow."

"Oh, so do I. What is the boat?"

"The *Esmerelda,* bound for Central and South America."

Suddenly, Jose Maria leaped into the Professor's arms, hugged him violently and planted a resounding kiss on both cheeks.

"That is my boat. Oh, words of joy! And, Herr Professor, you may call me Joe!"

CHAPTER III

THE PROFESSOR TELLS THE TUTOR A SECRET THAT FILLS HIM WITH HORROR

ARRIVED at the Hotel Regis, the strangely assorted pair, one a typical South American, the other no less typical of the United States, caught the doctor just as he was leaving the patient's room.

"Oh, you're the doctor," said the Professor. "How did you find him?"

"Bad — bad," answered the physician. "It's a clear case of typhoid. He'll be in bed for five or six weeks at the least —"

The doctor was startled into silence. Joe had uttered a howl and thrown himself with perfect abandon on the floor of the corridor. He was clearly about to prolong that howl to an accompaniment of tattooing supplied by his own ready feet, when a strong, firm hand enclasped his collar and raised him on high. That any one — particularly a poor person with the prospect of being hired into his service — should take such a liberty with him was sufficient to reduce him to silence and indignant astonishment.

"Now, you, Joe," cautioned the Professor in a matter of fact way, as he restored the astounded lad to his feet, "just remember that this is not a stage, and you're not giving a performance."

Joe was crushed. The assurance of the Professor was too much for him.

"I suppose," continued the brave young man, "that Señor Gomez should go to a hospital."

"It's the only thing," came the answer.

"I will not — I will not go to a hospital," cried Joe. "I will go home to my father who is the President of the Republic of Escadilla, *pronto.*"

Joe standing erect with his head thrown back and his eyes flashing defiance presented to the doctor's amused and wondering eyes as perfect a picture of dignity in the diminutive as could be conceived.

"That's all right, Joe; you'll get a good meal pretty soon," said the Professor, patting his head, which, somehow, went down.

The speech, as perfect a specimen of easy practicality as the doctor had ever heard, took all the wind out of Joseph's sails. It left him a regular small boy, waiting eagerly for guidance from his elder.

"Doctor," the Professor went on, "I think — I'm not certain yet — that I'll take this case in hand myself. Anyhow I'll settle the transfer to the hospital. And I thank you very much. Good-by."

As the two were about to enter the room, Joseph caught his companion's sleeve.

"Oh, Professor," he said, "I want to make the introduction to you with Señor Gomez. Tell me your real name."

"You may call me Professor Thomas — though that is not exactly my real name."

"But what is it?"

"I'll not tell you yet."

"I like it not. I am displeased. When will you tell?"

Professor Thomas paused.

"I'll tell it," he said, "when you've become the perfectly fine boy you ought to be. Perhaps I'll tell you even before that."

"But I am a perfectly fine boy," protested Joe indignantly.

"In your own estimation, yes; but a boy who throws himself down and kicks his legs the way you do and bawls like a baby may be a perfectly fine boy. All the same, I can't see it. We expect that sort of thing from a spoiled girl."

Joe was crushed.

"You are a most truth-telling man. You make a declaration of independence so often. We will go in."

It was the usual hotel room, almost monastic in its simplicity; a bed, two chairs, a lithograph, a closet, a bureau. Lying on the bed, was a young man with bright, black eyes, a slight moustache and clean-cut, aristocratic features. At sight of Joe, he raised himself on an arm and breathing a sigh of relief broke into a welcoming smile.

"Oh, Señor Gomez, I have much honor to introduce to you my friend, Professor Thomas."

"Glad to meet you," said Professor Thomas, putting out his hand.

The other took it graciously.

"I am honored to shake the hand of him who I feel sure has rescued that young charge of mine."

"Professor Thomas," went on Joe grandly, "is very poor man; but he is good and honest."

The subject of this laudation broke into laughter.

"See here, Joe, we are in the twentieth century," he remarked. "And when we talk of rich men in this country, we are mighty glad to be able to add that though rich they are honest."

"United States Americans! Bah!" sneered Joe. "Rockyfellow dollars! Rotten money!"

"Got a dime or two about you, Señor Gomez?" asked Professor Thomas.

The invalid, who had not ceased grinning genially since Tom first opened his mouth, reached under his pillow and brought out a handful of coins.

"Look here, you, Joe," continued the Professor, picking out a quarter, "go downstairs and get a sandwich or something, and don't come back till you've spent every cent and eaten everything you've bought."

There were times when Joseph could be perfectly obedient. This was one of them.

As Joe departed in glee, Professor Thomas smoothed the pillows, adjusted the window-curtains, turned the invalid so as to ensure him the most comfortable position, and then, still smiling, addressed himself to Señor Gomez.

"Excuse my haste; but I've got a date at noontime. Also, I am traveling on the *Esmerelda*, and I think I can keep my eyes on Joe. So would you be kind enough before I arrange to have you sent to a hospital to tell me what I ought to know about him?"

"Most gladly, most thankfully. He is the son of Señor Escobal, the President of the Republic of Escadilla."

"That fact he has impressed upon me. He must have told me of it ten times already."

Señor Gomez laughed.

"Permit me to observe that you are wonderful. I have already observed that you know how to talk to him saying the straight truth, yet saying it so that you show you like him."

Señor Gomez sighed.

"I myself have not the trick. I cannot manage him. It is he that manages me."

"Do you like boys?" asked the Professor.

"Not so much."

"That's the reason, I reckon. Every boy I meet is as good as a play to me. But let's get on."

"Four months ago I was employed by his father to take him touring about the United States. The end in view was that the boy might be educated by travel, might be taught English in a practical way, and might be coached in his studies so as to be fitted for high school."

"Fine idea," murmured the Professor.

"It worked out fairly well till one week ago, when I got beneath the weather. We had a few parts of arithmetic to go over and a few pages in English grammar. I'm under contract to have those studies completed."

"You needn't worry," put in the Professor; "when I come back this afternoon, I'll arrange to finish your contract according to terms."

"Thank you," said Señor Gomez, shaking his

companion's hand. "You are very good. However, there may be difficulties. The President of the Republic of Escadilla has many enemies. The man he defeated for the Presidency two years ago is most revengeful. Only last week, I received word that he is now in the States, and it is thought that he is up to mischief. So I am most anxious about the boy, lest some mischief should befall him."

"Whew! this is getting interesting," cried the Professor, a wave of enthusiasm passing over his face. "I like that. But," he added, as he rose and pressed a button, "we'll have to be a little careful. What kind of a republic is it anyhow?"

"Tabloid," answered the other. "It's small but proud. The Catholic religion is the religion of the country. But no religious teaching orders are allowed — especially the Jesuits."

"No teaching orders!" echoed the Professor. "Well, what orders are allowed?"

"Nuns that run hospitals and work. You see, they are useful."

"Are you a Catholic, Señor Gomez?"

The invalid snapped his fingers.

"Of a sort," he smiled.

"Stuff!" observed the Professor. "I'm tired of Catholics 'of a sort.' All the same, I've got it on you. You're going to a hospital where Sisters are in charge, and I'll see to it that you don't get out till your soul's as sound as your body."

"I think," said Señor Gomez, "that you would make a good Catholic out of me. You could manage both of us."

"And what," continued Professor Thomas, "have they against the Jesuits?"

"The Jesuits are too smart."

The Professor laughed.

"In South America they drive them out because they are too smart; in the United States we give such men higher salaries."

"I myself," continued the sick man, "have a very strong prejudice against the Jesuits."

"Why? Have you ever met them much?"

"No; I never met one in my life, and, in addition, I hope never to meet one. But I have read much. They cannot be trusted."

"Now that's strange," objected Professor Thomas; "I've met lots of them. They are mighty nice fellows. As to being smart, I don't know about that. However learned they may be, very few of them are good business men, which, in America and in these times, means that as schemers and plotters and smarties the average American business man can give them all the trumps and beat them out anyhow."

"Permit me to say with all deference to you, Professor Thomas, that you have met an unusual set of them; or perhaps, as is probably the case, they *pretend* to be simple."

"I think not," returned the Professor. He was about to say more, when Joseph burst into the room.

"Say, Professor Thomas, are you going to take care of me? Are you hired?"

"Youth," answered the Professor, "I'm twenty-four years of age, and never yet have I worked for a salary."

"Well, fill me with joy, and say you will take care of me."

"The President of the Republic of Escadilla would be most undyingly grateful to you, Professor Thomas; and it will unload my mind. Do consent," urged the sick man.

"Señor Gomez, do you speak Latin?"

"Fairly well."

"Then listen; this is in strict confidence." Professor Thomas leaned over and in the Latin tongue whispered at some length into the tutor's ear.

Quickly the invalid showed strong signs of interest, interest developed into excitement, finally when the Professor ended his confidence with three short words, the tutor gave a jump of horror and would have sprung from the bed.

"It's a lie," he said. "I believe it not."

"Thanks for the compliment," answered Professor Thomas, settling with firm hands the patient back in bed. "It's now nearly twelve o'clock. I'll be back at two. That gives you plenty of time to think about it. Good-by."

And the Professor, playfully digging Joe in the ribs, slipped out of the room.

"Come here, Joe," called the sick man. "Please pinch my arm. Harder, harder. That's it. Now I know that I'm awake."

"Why the excitement?" asked the boy.

"Santa Maria!" ejaculated the tutor. "It must be the delirium. It must be. Good-by, Joe, I am about to expire."

CHAPTER IV

THE PROFESSOR SHOWS HOW ONE MAY BE AT ONCE MONEYLESS AND INFLUENTIAL

"WELL," began Professor Thomas on his return at two o'clock sharp, "what have you got to say? Am I to go or stay?"

"You have been very good," answered Señor Gomez. "How can I be aught but grateful? They have brought me word that an ambulance will call for me at three, and that you have secured me a most elegant room. I cannot reward you as I would. Let me pay you —"

"Hold on. I am no grafter. We don't charge for observing the decencies of life. And there's a nun at that hospital, my dear sir, who is going to keep an eye on your soul. However, I clearly understand, so I'll say good-by."

"It is best," said the sick man. He looked troubled, confused, undetermined. "I will hold Joe over till next week. I thank you again."

"Good-by, Joe."

"What is this?" queried the lad.

"The fact of the matter, Joe, is this. Your tutor and I have talked the matter over, and we've agreed that you had best take the boat that leaves next week."

Incontinently, Joseph crumpled to the floor

and raising his voice bawled, while hands and feet began beating the carpet. Again, the same strong hand grasped the same collar, and firmly restored the stormy youth to his proper position.

"If you went about it the right way," commented Professor Thomas as he readjusted the boy's garments, "you'd make the finest jig-dancer of your age in the country. Well, I must go."

"Hold! Pause!" cried Joe, extending a dignified hand and arm toward the departing visitor. At that moment he looked like the average United States Senator explaining the loftiness of his sentiments to a doubtful constituency.

The Professor halted and gazed with a face at once smiling and wistful upon the blue-blooded youth.

Then Joe turned baleful eyes and an accusing finger at Señor Gomez.

"You are fired!" he exclaimed, chest out, nose a tangle of wrinkles, and head as superbly poised as that of a prohibitionist refusing a drink.

Then, he addressed himself to Professor Thomas, who had buried his face in his handkerchief.

"You are hired!"

Señor Gomez was grinning; the Professor was trying with doubtful success to control the muscles of his face, when there came a short rap at the door."

"Come in!" cried Joe.

The door opened, and in there walked a heavy-set man of middle age, whose eyes, as he entered, took in everything and every one in the room.

"Is Mr. Antonio Gomez here?" he asked.

"That is my name!" replied the Señor.

"And is Jose Maria Escobal here?"

"I have not the honor to be of your acquaintance!" rejoined the haughty youth.

"And who are you?" continued the stranger, fastening his eyes on the Professor.

"This is rather sudden, isn't it?" came the answer. "Suppose you tell us who you are yourself. Are you the census-taker?"

The man threw back his coat revealing a badge.

"I'm a deputy-marshal. You people intended taking a vessel to-morrow at ten o'clock."

"Our plans have changed," said Gomez.

"Well, you're not going to leave the United States until we're sure you have clean hands."

"Mine are cleaner than yours," put in Joe, at once very angry and highly alarmed.

"You are both to come with me at once."

"Are these two burglars or murderers?" asked the Professor.

"They are suspected of being emissaries of the Spanish Government. I'll give you two five minutes to make ready."

"Now, look here," protested Professor Thomas. "Do you happen to know that Señor Gomez has typhoid fever, and is about to be removed to a hospital?"

"I've got my orders."

"Yes; and possibly you've got your judgment, too."

"Well, I'll inquire of the Marshal. But I'll have to take the boy at once."

"I'm sure you're right," said the Professor.

"Just look at him. With a boy of his size at large — he must be ten years old — our Government may be brought tumbling about our ears."

The deputy looked at the Professor fixedly, sternly at first, till, catching the gleam in his eye, his lips began to twitch.

"It does look funny, doesn't it?" he remarked, becoming suddenly human.

"And I hope you've got a policeman to help you," added the Professor.

Then the deputy smiled broadly, becoming in the action a man and a brother.

At this juncture, Joe advanced within a few feet of the deputy, folded his arms upon his chest, and exclaimed:

"I am no burglar. I will never surrender."

The Marshal by way of answer playfully made a grab at the valiant lad, who at once jumped back in terror and threw himself for protection into the Professor's arms.

"Kill him!" he entreated.

The tragedy had thinned out into a comedy.

"By the way," said the Professor, "do you happen to know Mayor Endress?"

"The Mayor! I should say I do. He's my best friend. I'm deputy because of him."

"And has he any influence with your Marshal?"

"Influence! Why he wouldn't be Marshal, if it weren't for the Mayor."

The Professor took a letter from his coat pocket.

"I don't know the Mayor myself," he stated; "but I happen to have some very good friends

in Cincinnati who are closely related to him." At this point of the conversation the deputy removed his hat. "Now, if you'll step outside for a moment, I'll show you a few of these letters and I'll tell you a few things in confidence."

As the Professor stepped out into the hall with the deputy he noticed two men in the corridor who looked remarkably like detectives.

"Nothing doing, boys," said the deputy, waving them off.

They disappeared at once.

When the two re-entered, the Professor was bowed in by the politest deputy in the State of Louisiana.

"Señor Gomez," he announced, "I'm sure there's some mistake. At any rate, out of consideration for your distinguished friend here, I'm going to wait till he sees the Mayor; and I believe that all will be well. In the meantime, I take it upon myself to allow you to go to the hospital."

"He'll have brain-fever, if he gets any more visitors like you," put in the Professor.

"I'm really sorry, sir," explained the deputy. "But I didn't know he was ill; and when I came in I suspected he might be shamming. As for you, boy — I — I'm going to the Mayor's office with this gentleman, you might come along —"

"That is," put in the Professor, "if you'd like to."

"It gives me joy to go with you," cried Joe, catching the Professor's hand.

"Sir," cried Señor Gomez, beckoning to his rescuer, and whispering in his ear, "I want to

beg your pardon in most abject language. And I entreat you — I would be willing to go down on my knees to entreat you — to keep your eye on that boy, who will sail to-morrow, if it can be arranged."

"You have my promise," returned Professor Thomas. "I'll keep both eyes on him. And I'll try to take your place. I'll teach him, and keep him out of mischief; and, if I can, I'll see to it that somebody watches him from where I get off till he is safe in his home."

Señor Gomez kissed the Professor's hand.

"I am too grateful to speak. And let me assure you on my word of honor this charge against us has nothing in it. It is what you Americans call the 'frame-up.' Some enemy of the Republic has done this. It is the ex-President."

The Professor and the invalid thereupon entered into a secret conference, lasting for several minutes.

"I suspect that Joe has some enemy," said the Professor aloud. "Well, good-by, and may you be well soon."

"By the way, Joe," said the Professor, "I hope you didn't forget to inform the deputy marshal that your father's the President of the Republic of Escadilla."

"I did not forget," answered the indignant youth.

"It was the first thing he told me, sir, after you started talking to Gomez."

"How would it be," continued the wag, "if we got a nice placard printed in large type to be worn just below your collar and reading like

thus: 'My name is Jose Maria, and my father is President of the Republic of Escadilla'?"

For the first time since our acquaintance with him, Joe blushed, and as he accepted a caramel from his mentor's hand, he said entreatingly,

"Please do not make foolish with me."

CHAPTER V

IN WHICH THE MONEYLESS PROFESSOR HAS THE WHOLE CITY ADMINISTRATION WORKING FOR HIM

THE Mayor, a most accessible man, stout, keen-eyed, alert, on receiving from an office boy the Professor's card and the letters of introduction, after a rapid reading, at once said,

"Bring him right over."

As the Professor advanced, the Mayor fastened sharp, inquiring, rather suspicious eyes upon him. The American who has to deal with all sorts of conditions of men makes it a business to form a quick appraisal of each visitor. Many have an uncanny gift of reading the stranger's character in a few quick glances. Such a man was Mayor Endress. He was not a scholar. His early years had been years of toil. An orphan lad, he had been thrown at the age of twelve upon his own resources. His work from the first brought him into contact with rich and poor, merchant and malefactor. If there were universities which recognized Human Nature as a branch of study, the Mayor by the time he was twenty-one years of age would have been adjudged worthy of the highest honors.

That one glance at the approaching professor put to instant riot his look of suspicion.

"Welcome," he exclaimed as he rose from his chair, "to New Orleans. The city is yours. I am happy to meet one who is such a friend of my nearest and dearest relatives."

Joe, in obedience to his mentor's command, stood at attention at the further end of the large room. His eyes grew large and wondering at the vision of the mayor, ruler of a great city, jumping up and clasping his professor's hand as warmly as though he were welcoming a prince of royal blood.

"And he's a poor man and hired," murmured the boy to himself.

For a few minutes the two men spoke together in earnest whispers. Then —

"Joe, come here," called the Professor. "This," he continued as the wrinkled-nosed lad came into the august presence, "is Master Jose Maria Escobal. But your Honor may call him Joe, and let it go at that."

Joe took the Mayor's outstretched hand with a certain foreign grace. He was not a little proud of the opportunity of shaking hands with so great a man, for he realized that wonderful as was the Republic of Escadilla, it was quite a small affair, in the matter of population, as compared with the great city of New Orleans, a city which to ever so many South Americans is the best known and, by consequence, the greatest of all the cities in the United States.

"Joe," said the Mayor, "I am glad to meet you, very glad, indeed."

"And I, Honorable Mayor, I am fill with much joy. My father is the President of the Republic of Escadilla."

"Good gracious, you don't say so!" said the Mayor with a straight face.

"Why don't you tell him about your mother and the rest of your family?" inquired the Professor after a short fit of coughing.

"My mother," said the unabashed youth, "is the most beauteous woman in the world. She is most sweet, and she has six children and of these I am the fourth to arrive. She calls me her baby."

"Your mother," commented the Professor, "is wise. She certainly knows what she is talking about. And now, your Honor, Joe proposes to sail to-morrow in the same boat with me."

"Did you get your passports?" inquired the Mayor.

"I was going to get mine this morning, but I happened to meet Joe here, who was lost, and he's kept me busy ever since. I intend getting mine in the next hour or so."

"It is my custom, Honorable Mayor, to have business like that done by my tutor, Señor Gomez, who is now very sick man."

"And besides," put in the Professor, "the United States Marshal has sent this boy orders not to leave the country."

"What!" cried the Mayor, rising to his feet.

"Look at the kid!" pursued the Professor with the utmost gravity. "Anybody can see that he is a menace to our national safety."

The "kid" in question was just then endeavor-

ing to slip furtively a caramel into his expressive mouth. The Mayor's eyes put a stop to his maneuver. His mouth remained opened with the caramel two inches away in the arrested hand.

"But why should the Marshal worry about him?" continued his Honor.

"He's part of a gigantic conspiracy," the Professor made answer. "The other part is Señor Gomez, his tutor, now due for six weeks in the hospital. There's a deputy outside who has orders to intern him and this blood-thirsty youth. Go on, Joe, and swallow that caramel."

"Duffy," roared the Mayor.

From a near-by cubby-hole issued a young man, gold-spectacled, precise, inquiring. It was Duffy.

"Duffy," said the Mayor, "you get in touch with the Marshal. Tell him I will be responsible for Señor Gomez and the boy, Jose Maria Escobal, he is tutoring. Tell him it's a matter of supreme importance. Tell him — oh, you know what — just get it through. This boy is to sail to-morrow for South America."

"Very good, your Honor," answered Duffy, who at that time was devoting his reading hours to the perusal of the Arabian Nights; "I hear and obey."

Then Duffy got busy. He telephoned to the Marshal's office and not finding him there, to his club, to his home, to his restaurant, and finally to his best friend, from whom he learned that the Marshal had gone motoring to his country residence forty miles away.

"Well, Duffy," cried the Mayor at this juncture as the young man buried himself in the telephone-book, "how are you making out?"

"I think, your Honor, I'll have to use long distance."

"Use wireless, too, if it helps," suggested the Mayor.

"I figure," continued the Mayor's right hand man, "that I can get the Marshal twenty miles out. His favorite stopping place is there. If necessary, I'll have him held up somewhere along the line of his travels."

"Use the police force, Duffy, if it helps. Clancy!"

From another cubby-hole issued a stout man with all the bonhomie of a successful reporter. In fact, Clancy had graduated from the reportorial rooms of a local daily into the Mayor's office with the reputation of being the best hand at a "story" in the city of New Orleans.

"Your Honor?" said Clancy interrogatively.

"Clancy, I want you to take this gentleman and this boy to the ticket office of the Fruit Company, and get them tickets; but first you've got to get them passports. This is Professor Thomas of Cincinnati."

"Delighted," said Clancy. "I'll get your passport without trouble, I think; but what about that boy — he is not an American."

"No, no, no," cried Joe, shaking his head violently; "I am very far from such."

"Come here, Clancy, a word in your ear."

Whatever the Mayor said, it filled Clancy's soul with delight.

"Good!" he exclaimed, "I'll get those passports, if I have to break a leg."

"Did it occur to you, Mr. Clancy," put in Professor Thomas, "that this boy has an order from the Marshal not to leave the city?"

"Oh, the deuce," cried Clancy. "I'm afraid we're up against it."

"Where's the deputy?" said the Mayor.

Duffy at the telephone, apparently very busy, made a sign, whereupon in stalked the deputy.

"That you, Bill?" cried the Mayor genially. "How's the wife?"

"Fine, your Honor," replied Bill, beaming with delight.

"And Frank? Is he over his sickness?"

"He's back at school, your Honor."

"And has that baby cut its tooth yet?"

"It's got two, your Honor." Bill's face was now in a state of illumination.

"Well, Bill, I want you to go down with Clancy and my two visitors, and back him up with your authority as deputy-marshal in getting passports and transportation for this gentleman and this boy."

"But, your Honor," protested Bill. "I — now — you see, I've got orders from the Marshal to keep that boy from leaving. And — and —"

There came a whoop from the telephone. The party all turned their faces toward Duffy.

"Hello! that you, Marshal? This is Duffy."

"I've got him all right," said Duffy, listening and talking at once. Presently Duffy called: "Come here, Bill; you'll get your orders direct.

Your Honor," he continued, "it's all fixed. Señor Gomez may get well or die as it suits him without causing our native land any worry, and that boy may go to Africa if he chooses."

"State to the Honorable Marshal that I do not desire to go to Africa; but I desire to return to my own country where my father is President in South America of the Republic of Escadilla."

"Joe," suggested the Professor, "I see an office boy over there who is not within ear-shot. Suppose you go over and tell him about your father. He will be interested."

"Oh, Herr Professor, do not make foolish."

Then the deputy returned from the telephone, announcing that he was commissioned to use the whole power of the Marshalship to get the two passports in question.

Within an hour all was arranged satisfactorily. Clancy saw to it that the finest stateroom on the boat, although every one had been reserved, was allotted to the Professor and his temporary charge.

Before six o'clock, the Professor visited the tutor in the hospital, took charge of the boy's money, received final instructions, and arranged for the lad to spend the night in the hospital.

"I'll call for you, Joe, to-morrow at nine o'clock; the boat starts at ten."

"But why stay you not with me?"

"I am not hired till to-morrow," laughed the Professor. "Meantime I have a few of my own affairs to settle."

"But where are you stopping by night?"

"I'll tell you that, Joe, when I tell you my name!"

"And when will you announce to me your name?"

"I don't know, Joe, for sure; but I think it will be about the time you can meet a stranger without telling him that your father is President of the Republic of Escadilla in South America."

"You are a most playful man," commented the youth.

Next morning at nine o'clock the Professor escorted Joe from the hospital to a splendid Packard waiting without.

"You are a very poor man. Where did you obtain this noble machine?"

"Oh," said the Professor casually, "I really could not afford one myself, so the Mayor sent me his."

"What! the Mayor of New Orleans."

"Why of course; get in."

For five minutes as the machine under the skilful hands of the Mayor's chauffeur threaded its way through the streets, Joe sat back facing the Professor and gazing at him in silent awe.

CHAPTER VI

THE PROFESSOR DISCOVERS THAT JOE HAS AN ACTIVE ENEMY AND THAT THE NAME OF THE MAYOR OF NEW ORLEANS IS STILL A CHARM TO CONJURE WITH

THE good ship *Esmerelda* was to start at ten o'clock. As a matter of fact it did not leave its wharf until five minutes after the noon hour, during which delay the Professor leaning over the rail watched with vivid interest an army of negro roustabouts taking from a neighboring boat enough bananas apparently to satisfy the wants of North America for a year. Joe, meanwhile, romped about the boat taking observations and making them, too.

"Hey, Professor," he cried, "there's an American girl among us. She has not more than sixteen years and she make eyes at me. See her over there? She smiles at all the men, except the black men. She wants them to be plunged in love with her. She's a — a —"

"A flirt, Joe?"

"That is the true word. She is a flirt and an American."

"She is a flirt, all right," assented the Professor, "but you needn't put everything on us

poor Americans. That girl is on her way home. She was born in Central America."

"Who informs you, Professor?"

The tutor grinned, and Joe darted away. Meanwhile, the Professor calmly viewed the activities of the landing place. Incidentally he took mental note of the various passengers. He was especially interested in a large, heavy-set man, heavily jewelled, richly moustached, dark and furtive in his movements, looking, for all the world, like a conspirator of one of the Latin countries in a comic opera.

Whenever the Professor's eyes casually glanced in this gentleman's direction, they caught him looking searchingly at Joe. The man moved about quietly, but always in such a way as to keep close to the boy. Presently Joe came running to his tutor to announce some new discovery. The tutor held him in conversation for a short while, and then dismissed him with gifts of candy. From that moment, the strange man was watching the Professor.

It was hard upon eleven o'clock when the Professor, much distracted from his line of thought and observation by the industrious attempts of the flirt to catch the attention and arouse the interest of a young man standing on the wharf quite close to the boat, was suddenly aroused by a voice in his ear.

"Pardon me, sir. As a fellow passenger, I take the liberty to address you. You are lonesome?"

"Not at all," returned the Professor, turning smilingly upon the comic opera conspirator.

"'I am never less alone than when alone.'"

"The boat, I am informed, will not start for yet some time. My name is Señor Pasquale."

Here the man paused. His manners were fairly easy, rather artificial, his smile, revealing beautiful, strong white teeth, was forced, while his eyes were shifting.

"Glad to make your acquaintance, sir. You may call me Professor Thomas."

"Ah! you teach?"

"I did."

"And now?"

"I don't."

The Professor atoned for his sententiousness by the same smile which had won the heart of almost every child he had ever met. There was nothing in his face to reveal that he was engaged in a duel of words.

"Simply traveling for your health?"

"There's nothing the matter with me that I know of."

"I see you are a genuine American."

"You couldn't give me a greater compliment."

"Ah! but I love your stars and stripes."

"I compliment you on your good taste."

Señor Pasquale took out his watch. It was a large gold one, attached to his person by a massive gold chain, which wound about his neck.

"It is now," he said, "five minutes after eleven. Near here there is a place where they have the finest Spanish wine to be procured in America for love or money. What say you? Will you drink with me? Our return shall be accomplished in five minutes."

"I thank you, Señor Pasquale; but I never look upon the wine when it is red."

"Oh, but it is not red," persisted Pasquale, who clearly was not well versed in Scripture. "It is of a beautiful sparkling gold."

"That's just as bad as though it were red. Seriously, it is not my custom to eat or drink between meals."

The Professor fancied that he caught a momentary gleam of anger in the man's eyes. Was it fancy?

"I am sorry," was his comment. "You are going as far as South America?"

"That," replied the Professor, wickedly choosing a phrase beyond most foreigners, "'lies in the lap of the gods.'"

"Ah, yes; I understand," pursued Pasquale, lying bravely. "And your son —"

"My what?"

"Your little boy? Your son."

"He is not my son. Just an acquaintance; but I haven't the least doubt in the world," pursued the Professor gravely, "that he's somebody's son."

Don Pasquale gave up. Touching his hat, he walked off humming a tune while the Professor once more addressed himself to his observations.

Fifteen minutes later he was brought up with a shock. Joe clasping Don Pasquale's hand was crossing the gangway for the shore.

"Joe! Joe!" he cried, hurrying after the two.

Joe did not hear him. The Professor, forgetting what dignity he had, leaped over a steamer

chair, then several trunks, and, still running, again shouted out Joe's name at the top of his voice.

Joe heard him this time. He turned and paused.

"Hold on, Joe. Wait."

The Professor, a moment later, was facing the boy and Pasquale.

"Pardon," said Señor Pasquale, "I am just taking the boy out to get him a box of candy. We shall return at once."

"Joe," said the Professor sternly; "come here."

There was that in his mentor's tone, a tone new to Joe, which caused the lad to obey without hesitation.

"Grant me pardon, Herr Professor," he said, running to his tutor's side, "I thought not to ask."

Señor Pasquale no longer smiled. He was in a towering rage.

"Have you authority over that boy?" he asked, facing the Professor.

"Run, Joe; run for our cabin," whispered the Professor.

The serious tone of the command, the stern, set face of Professor Thomas and the violent passion of Señor Pasquale had scared the boy. At the words he leaped up the gangway.

With some unintelligible remarks that sounded like profanity Pasquale jumped forward in pursuit. The Professor was no less quick. With a sudden spring he made for Pasquale. The open palm of his right hand caught

the man, as he was running full tilt, on the forehead. The impact was terrible. It brought Pasquale to a dead halt. He spun around and around, like a decapitated chicken, his face lost all expression, and he might have fallen had not the Professor caught him in a strong grip and helped him up the gangway into the ship.

"Is the steward about?" he called.

The steward certainly was. In fact it would seem that every one on board, save Joe, who had "sought the seclusion which a cabin grants," was on hand, excited and puzzled.

"Yes; I'm the steward," said a young fellow in uniform. "What the Halifax do you want?"

"You'll find a knife in this man's coat and a pistol in the proper pocket. Come on, take hold. We'll bring him to his cabin. He needs rest."

"Any more orders to give, young fellow?" inquired the steward petulantly. "You know it's not my business to search for knives and pistols."

"Well, you see," returned the Professor, "I'd like to live to the end of the voyage, if it's all the same to you."

"We don't like rough-house on our boat," continued the irritated steward. "Who in Halifax are you, anyway?"

"I'm the man that's got the cabin along with Jose Maria Escobal."

"Oh!" exclaimed the steward, putting off his peevishness like a garment. "I beg your pardon, sir. You're the friend of our Mayor."

"That's it," assented the Professor.

"Say," continued the steward, as they assisted the dazed Pasquale along the deck, "that

was the prettiest piece of work I ever saw. Open hand, too. No blow at all, no sign of an attack. Where did you get it?"

"When I was a boy," said the Professor, "there was a famous prize fighter in our city who used to work this trick on everybody who didn't know him. Some of us boys took it up among ourselves. It's the first time I ever had to use it seriously. Señor Pasquale here feels as if his neck were broken."

"I'm mighty glad to meet you, sir," said the steward politely. "You may rest assured that Pasquale may whistle for his knife and his gun till we drop him off. What did he do, anyhow?"

"He was taking Jose Maria, whom I call Joe, ashore, ostensibly to give him a box of candy. Now I don't want to be unfair; I don't want to say what I thought his little game was; but I have my suspicions, and as I have assumed charge of the boy, I just had to prevent it."

"Here's his cabin," said the steward. "I thank you, sir, and I assure you that I'll do everything in my power to see that Pasquale behaves himself as long as he is on board. I hope you'll excuse my language, sir; you see, I was excited."

The fact is that we have reported the steward as using the word "Halifax" twice. But it was not "Halifax." The steward was not speaking for publication, and it would be unfair to report his language without bowdlerizing it.

"Forget it," said the Professor.

"Thank you, sir. And if I can do anything

for you or the boy, only let me know. It will be a pleasure to oblige you."

"I'll not forget it; good-by," said the Professor, walking away as bland and unconcerned as though nothing had happened. "Good gracious!" he reflected, "this thing reminds me of Ali Baba in the Arabian Nights. All he had to do was to say 'Open Sesame.' I can get the same results by saying, 'My friend the Mayor.'"

"O Professor," cried Joe, coming up on the run, "is he dead?"

"Who, Joe?"

"That man. They all do say you broke his neck."

"Well, I didn't. He's stunned."

"You are very strong man — most wondrous man."

The Professor laughed.

"It's not strength, Joe; just a boxing trick I learned when I was a little more than your age."

"And will you teach me the box?"

"We'll see," laughed the other. "Now look you, Joe, you must be careful."

"Why you order me around like a baby," Joe went on, growing angry as he spoke. "You speak at me, you shout. Am I a negro? My father is the Pres —"

"Exactly, Joe. It seems to me that you mentioned the fact to me before. And that's where, I believe, the trouble comes in. That man suspected, possibly knew, that I had you, the son of the President and so forth, in charge; and he tried to get me off this boat to take a glass of Spanish wine with him. Now, Joe, if I had ac-

cepted his invitation and gone off with him, it's dollars to doughnuts that I would not have come back. I don't say any great harm would have befallen me, but I would certainly have missed this boat."

"How mystic," exclaimed the lad. "And you know who he is? You know so much."

"I'll tell you what I think he is, Joe. I think he belongs to a certain class of South Americans who when they get dead tired of resting themselves in a hammock, get up, yawn, stretch their arms, and say, 'Come, let us start a revolution.'"

"Ai! Ai!" cried Joe. "I see! I see! It's the man who wanted to be re-elected President of the Republic of Escadilla — a very bad man. My father banish him out of the country."

"Was his name Pasquale?"

"I recollect not."

"Well, it's not improbable that he is using an assumed name. If I'm not mistaken, he was shadowing us when we were getting our passports. Somebody was; but I didn't get a square look at him. Anyhow it was a man of the same build. If you had gone with him a moment ago, you'd not have come back."

"Professor," said Joe humbly, crossing his hands over his breast and lowering his head, "pardon and forget. I am a miscreant."

"No, you're not, Joe. You have the making of a fine boy with lots to learn."

"My father," continued the contrite lad, "will honor you very much, and when I have told him how you did for me, he will make you rich."

"I don't care for riches," laughed the other.

"And when I become president of that Republic, or of some other republic, I will have you to coin the laws."

"Do you know, Joe, that I should rather like that. There are several laws I should make the very first chance I got."

"Oh, Professor, tell me quick."

"First of all," said the Professor, "I would abolish all hammocks."

"When I become president," announced the lad with supreme gravity, "I will put an end to all hammocks. They shall be no more."

"And I would introduce baseball."

"Baseball it shall be."

"Thirdly, I would bring back the teaching orders, including the Jesuits."

"This is too much," cried Joe, wrinkling his nose. "I will make the laws myself. No Jesuit will ever walk into my republic. Oh, Professor, make not foolish with me."

"I'm serious, Joe. But now one word more. Keep away from Pasquale."

"It is most wise."

"He won't bother you if you avoid him. The steward is going to watch him carefully; and I'm sure he will have every one connected with the boat on the look out. The steward is with us."

"That is very strange. A passenger told me that the steward had indignation with you."

"He was vexed at first; but when I told him who I was, he became my friend at once."

"Ah, I know, Professor, you told him you were the tutor of the son and heir of the President of the —"

"Not at all. I let him know that I was the friend of the Mayor of New Orleans."

Joe, for the second time, flushed.

"Well, sir," said the steward, addressing the Professor, "the man's a bit shaken, but all right. I've got his knife and gun, and what I didn't say to him isn't worth saying. He'll behave all right on this boat."

"Thank you very much, steward. By the way, Joe, it's possible you haven't had a chance to tell this gentleman who you are."

"I am Jose Maria," answered Joe; "and my father is the President of the Republic of Escadilla."

"That so?" commented the steward. "Never heard of the place. And how," he continued turning to the Professor, "did you find your friend the Mayor? Great man, isn't he?"

"I desire," said Joe, "that this boat move. I want much to go home."

"Joe," said his tutor a few minutes after the boat started down the last reach of the great Mississippi, "you were talking a while ago of being president of Escadilla or some other republic. Do the male members of your family pick out presidents for steady jobs?"

"My grandfather," said Joe, once more throwing out his chest, "was also president of a republic."

"How long?"

"Eight years and one month."

"But why only eight years and one month; why didn't he keep on, making it a steady job?"

"Oh," he answered, "they assaxinated him."

CHAPTER VII

JOE DISCOURSES LEARNEDLY ON BASEBALL AND REVOLUTION

THE first day of the voyage, as the vessel steamed through the jetties down the Mississippi into the Gulf of Mexico, passed uneventfully enough. The Professor had become the observer of all observers. The South American passengers, who were in a majority, viewed him with awe; the Americans, among whom his friendship with the Mayor of New Orleans had been noised about, vied with each other in showing him all manner of little attentions.

The young flirt was quick to take an opportunity to engage him in conversation. She began, to borrow an expression brought into being by the most pernicious class of moving-picture producers, by attempting to "vamp" him. When the Professor wanted to appear obtuse, he succeeded greatly. Ignoring her sophistications, he spoke to her as though she were a little girl. He had the power of suggestion to an unusual degree. Within a few minutes she actually became a little girl, spoke of her mother, her sisters, her brothers, and, to her subsequent astonishment, heartily concurred with him in his strictures on foolish young women. She made

eyes no more that day. In fact, until she arrived at her destination somewhere in Central America, she talked and acted like a sweet young girl of fourteen; and became quite chummy with no less a person than the son of the President of the Republic of Escadilla. The girl had spent a year in "The States" attending a fashionable boarding-school. She had been there long enough to put on a thin veneer of sophistication; but not long enough for it to sink deep into her. The Professor consciously and Joe unconsciously did much to rub it off. Another week in their company and there would have been restored to her that priceless boon — the golden days of childhood.

Within three hours of their sailing, the Professor had received the confidences or, which is quite another thing, lent an ear to the tales of nearly thirty passengers. Few men are habitual liars — but once they become travelers, they lapse. Away from their surroundings, they give full rein to their imaginations. There were, for instance, ten men there who regaled the twinkling-eyed Professor with accounts of their physical achievements which, on their own showing, threw his little tilt with Pasquale into the shade.

Meanwhile, Joe, after a romp with the flirt, began to eye his tutor first yearningly, then with jealousy. The Professor read his thoughts.

"Come here, Joe," he said, affably dismissing a girl of fourteen in short dresses and hair in plaits, who, married a month before, was on her way to join her husband in South America. "I've been neglecting you, and I'm sorry. I'd

rather talk with you than with anybody on board a thousand times."

Joe smiled in heavenly fashion.

"Oh, Professor! You make me much happiness. It is to you that I love to talk."

"Suppose, Joe, we go and seat ourselves in our steamer chairs where we can watch the flying-fishes play, and look out upon other wonders of the deep, once we get out of this river, and talk about many things, like the walrus."

"'The time has come, the walrus said,'" recited Joe joyfully and with many gestures, "'to talk of many things. Of ships and shoes and sealing wax, of cabbages and kings.'"

"Why, Joe," cried the tutor as they seated themselves, "have you read 'Alice in Wonderland'?"

"Oh, yes; I am a reader of many books. I have also read 'Robinson Crusoe,' and the 'Arabian Nights' and 'Kidnapped' and 'Treasure Island' and 'Tom Sawyer' and 'Little Lord Fauntleroy' and other books of forgotten names."

"Good," said the Professor. "I understand now your manner of conversation. Sometimes you are quite bookish in your phrases. Did you like Mark Twain's books?"

"It make me split my sides for merriment."

"He was an American author."

"It was not his fault; no one inquired of him where he would like to be born. The Americans, they love money very much."

"Mark Twain, Joe, was a typical American; and he did not set too much store by money. He

made a fortune in his books, and then was brought to bankruptcy through a publisher with whom he was associated in partnership. When the bankruptcy proceedings were over, he owed a huge sum of money. According to law, he did not have to pay one cent of that debt. But do you know what he did?"

"What?"

"He toured the world giving readings and lectures. He worked unflaggingly until he had paid off every cent to his creditors."

"But look at Rockyfellow," urged the lad; "he come into Mexico and he impose on the Mexican. He love money too much. My father say the Americans are dollar-hunters."

"What your father says, Joe, is, I am sorry to say, true of a certain class of Americans who represent what they call big business. I don't think they are bad men at heart. But they make business a big game; and unconsciously in the excitement of it crowd out others. These men do not represent the great body of citizens of the United States who care less for money, I believe, than the people of any civilized country."

"I have observed much to-day and yesterday," said the youth. "You very poor man, and the Americans, the Mayor and Duffy and Clancy, and the deputy all treat you as if you were a millionaire."

"I'm glad you noticed that, Joe. In the last ten years, I have seldom gone about with as much as a dollar in my pocket, often without one cent, and yet everybody as a rule is very nice to me."

"And you are nice to everybody."

"By the way," continued the Professor, "I noticed you talking to our waiter at the table. You are very high and mighty, Joe."

"Oh, he is but a servant — a nobody."

"You mean he is a poor man."

"Yes; a poor man."

"And yet you talk about us Americans setting such value on money. Joe, in the United States there are to most of us, no servants, no inferiors. We show as much respect to a car conductor as you show to a rich man."

"You fill me with surprise," said Joe.

"And when I was a boy, if I talked to a waiter or a servant as you call him, the way you did, my father would give me what Paddy gave the drum."

"Paddy who? And what did he give the drum?"

The Professor explained.

"I will try to be American gentleman like you," said Joe. "And we will make laws together. In my Republic there shall be no servants."

"And no hammocks," laughed the Professor.

"And why no hammocks? Are they not comforting?"

"Indeed they are: most comforting. And that is just why I'd exclude them. Look you, Joe, suppose I lived in the tropics. I come out on my porch of a morning thinking of doing some work. There's a nice hammock there. It is comforting. If I'm human — and I certainly am — as like as not in three cases out of four I'll let the work go and elect the hammock."

"It is most natural in a hot country that people care not to work hard. It is a wise thought to banish the hammock. But, Professor, it is not of necessity that our people in the tropics work hard. It is there easy to live."

"That's so, Joe. It is easy to live there and easy to loaf. No wonder you have revolutions in South America every fine day. Idleness always leads to mischief. Keep your people busy and you will have no revolutions."

"But I like the revolution. My grandfather make revolution, and he became President. My father make revolution, and he is now the President of the —"

"Yes, yes; you told me that before, I believe. But how was your grandfather killed?"

"A wicked man got up a bad revolution."

"And suppose Pasquale goes back and gets up a revolution and kills your father."

"But that is wrong — most wicked."

"Ah, I see; whenever you get up a revolution, it's all right. But when some one gets back at you with another revolution, it's all wrong."

"I am foolish. I look at it only one way. You, my Professor, are wise; you see all the sides. Talk to me more. I wish to be like you."

"Have you ever played baseball, Joe?"

"I did play twice in the city of Los Angeles; but I did not finish the game."

"Why not?"

"In the first game, I struck at the ball three times, and found it not. And the player who stood behind me missed to catch the ball, and the American boy shouted that I should run. And

I ran, and I thought I got to the base before the ball. But the umpire said, 'You're out,' and I told him he was mistaken and he said in a rough way, 'Get off that base,' and I sprang at his throat, and he shook me off and gave me a discolored eye."

"And what about your second try?" asked the Professor, maintaining with difficulty a straight face.

"I play second base for one inning. And there was a most rude boy on the opposition side, who hit the ball hard and got to first base. And he was making fun of me and laughing. Another boy with the bat knocked a — what you call it — a ball that jumped along the ground —"

"A grounder," suggested the Professor.

"That is the word. He knock a grounder to the shorty."

"Short stop?"

"Yes; to the short stop, and he arrest it with his two hands and I was standing on the second base, and he threw it to me. I did not expect such conduct. I formed my hands to catch too late, and I did not hold the ball, and that boy on first came running and ran into me and knocked me down."

"Indeed."

"And I filled with rage, and caught him by the hair, and he bloodied my nose."

"If you had played more baseball, Joe, you'd have much better control of your temper. Now, let me ask you something. Suppose you were captain of a team. It is the last half of the fifth inning and the score is five to two in favor of the

other side. Your side is at bat. When there are three men on base and two out, you come to bat. You strike at the first ball and the second — that's two strikes. Then the pitcher sends another at which you do not strike. It is over a corner of the plate. You think it is too high; but the umpire thinks it is just about right, and calls you out on strikes. What would you do?"

"I would make him take it back."

"But umpires cannot reverse their decisions in a case like that; he couldn't take it back."

"Then I would refuse to play."

"Exactly; now the American boy of your age, would not. An American boy when he is seven or eight years of age and just beginning to play baseball might act in that way; but in a year or two, he learns to submit to the judgment of the umpire."

"It is most foolish," objected Joe.

"No; it is wisdom. Our boys are taught from infancy to submit to the decisions of authority. That, I think, is one of the reasons why the citizens of the United States are so wonderfully law-abiding. When you are president of the Republic, get your boys to play baseball and put a high luxury tax on hammocks, and there'll be no more revolutions."

"It shall be so, Herr Professor, and no one shall repose himself in a hammock from the rising of the sun until the time of the siesta."

"Fine! that's an improvement on my suggestion. I observe," continued the Professor, taking out his watch, "that it's after four o'clock. It will be two hours before we get out of the river

into the gulf. Suppose we go to our stateroom and take up your studies. I hope to get you ready for high school in three days."

"Oh, Professor," responded the youth with a vivid remembrance of Duffy, "I hear and obey."

CHAPTER VIII

THE PROFESSOR'S NIGHT ADVENTURE AND JOE'S CONFESSION

JOE was an unusually bright boy, and the tutor had an unusual gift in the imparting of knowledge. The little lad became so interested in his studies that, with the exception of his meals, he lost interest in everything else. By the middle of the forenoon of the third day, he had finished the remaining parts of arithmetic and grammar necessary for his entrance into high school.

"Joe," said the Professor, "I think you may have a holiday till we make our first stop. They say that at our present rate we shall reach Belize before six o'clock this afternoon."

"You must be very tired, Herr Professor."

"Not at all, Joe; it is a pleasure to teach bright boys, especially if they are anxious to learn. You are really a very bright boy, and I've never yet had a pupil so keen in interest as you."

"Herr Professor, you bring the blushes to my cheeks. And I want to tell you something important."

"What is it, Joe?"

"I no more inform people that my father is the President of the Republic of Escadilla in

South America. I have not said it since yesterday noon. I will cease to boast."

"Fine work, Joe," and the Professor's eyes twinkled as he spoke. "I notice you're improving."

"And," continued Joe, "I have a confession to announce."

"Yes?"

"Yes; I no longer despise the Americans. I have met your Mayor, very great man, and Duffy and Clancy and the deputy and the Sister at the hospital who manufactured for me most luscious lemonade. And they are all Americans, and for the dollar they care not. And, Herr Professor, I have met you. You are very poor, but you are so amazing. When I get home I will sing 'My Country 'tis of Thee' and the 'Star Bangled Spanner.'"

"I think," commented the Professor, whose features save for his eyes wore the gravity proper to a funeral function, "that if you sang the 'Star Bangled Spanner' to a crowd of American boys, you'd bring down the house. Well, how about the holiday?"

"Oh, Professor, pause for a moment. I am much in trouble. I am agitated!"

"Stomach-ache, possibly?"

"That is foolishness! It is deeper."

"Joe, is it really serious? Nothing very wrong, I hope."

"I know not. It is my conscience. I will tell it all."

"Look here, Joe, I'm not a priest. So don't try to make your confession to me."

"I speak," said Joe with great dignity, "to a most dear friend, whose rocks and rills and native hills I love because he loves them."

"Good gracious!" murmured the Professor under his breath.

"Last night, Professor, when I had such awful pains in my insides —"

"I told you after you ate six of those apples that they were green, and you would keep on."

"You remain up with me till after midnight. You make the steward and the stewardess wait on me, you get the ship doctor, you put on the mustard plaster, and you watch over me like my mother."

"Forget it," said the Professor simply.

"I refuse," returned the little lad with fire in his eyes. "And after I fell asleep you watch by me for so long a time."

"How do you know that, Joe? We do not pay much attention to sleeping witnesses."

"Oh, but I wake. I wake and say nothing. I felt too sick, and I observed you out of the angle of my eye."

"The deuce you did."

"And one time you had your beads; and another time you had your crucifix. You pray very much. And a long time you were on your knees."

"Were you asleep at all?"

"Oh, yes, Herr Professor, I sleep and I wake; and sometimes I knew not which I was. And when you ceased to pray, you feel my pulse and bathe my forehead and tuck me in. You must have stayed up till after two."

"Yes, Joe, I reckon I did. I was afraid you might get worse and you were in pain. How could I sleep? And that gave me time to pray. I need prayer; we all do."

The Professor did not think it well to inform the boy that these vigils lasted far beyond two o'clock and had gone on till daybreak. Feeling the responsibility of his tutorship, he had remained at the boy's side till midnight. Then when he was about to turn in, stealthy steps outside had caught his ear. Could it be Pasquale again? There was no light burning in the stateroom at the time. The Professor held his breath. He strained his hearing. Yes, there could be no doubt; there were footsteps, footsteps which despite the throbbing of the engines he could from time to time faintly distinguish. After several minutes all was quiet. With an arm protectingly around the pillow upon which rested Joe's head, the Professor, abnormally alert, listened for further sounds. What seemed to him to be at least a quarter of an hour passed when he fancied that he heard a slight noise, as of a suppressed sneeze or sigh, at the door. The stateroom was unlighted; nevertheless, the moonlight shining in through the porthole made every object in it visible as though in a mist. If some one were outside watching at the keyhole the Professor could not move without being detected. He was sitting at the moment beside the sleeping boy and facing the door. Yes, he was sure there was someone outside. Quietly, after some moments of reflection, he made the sign of the cross, slowly, calmly; but as he finished it the same

slow moving hand changed to the swiftest of motions. In one rapid gesture, it grasped a glass of water by the boy's side and dashed the contents at the keyhole. The man followed this gesture so quickly with his entire body that he was at the door almost as quickly as the water, flinging it open with a suddenness that sent someone outside head down and heels up on the corridor.

The Professor jerked the prowler, rubbing one eye and very much perturbed, to his feet.

"Señor Pasquale," he said, "I hope you'll not catch a cold in your eye. Some keyholes have very strong draughts. I wish you a good night's rest."

And outwardly calm, the Professor re-entered, bolted the door, and betook himself to those devotions in some of which his pupil had discovered him. But beneath his calm there was trouble of mind; for besides Pasquale he had seen the scurrying forms of three men. Clearly, he reflected, there was danger ahead. A conspiracy was on foot. He feared not for himself. He took no thought of his own danger; for the Professor was a man of unusual bravery. He slept no more that night. But he prayed till the dawn, prayed for strength, for light, and, being young and in perfect physical condition, gave no sign next morning of his long vigil.

This episode he thought it best to conceal from the boy.

When therefore, he said, "I need prayer; we all do," Joe, who had been looking for just some such opening, said:

"And I need prayer, too, Professor. I am

a miscreant. You pray and you are brave and kind and you are most powerful without wealth. You like to teach me?"

"It is as good as a picnic to me."

"Then grant me not a holiday. I am ignorant of very much religion. Before I go to high school, I would make my first Communion."

"Are you going to a Catholic high school?"

"In our country there is no such school. Our schools are neutral, as they say."

"Joe, I'm extremely glad you have asked me. If there's anything I love to teach it is Catechism. If I only had four days, I could get you ready."

"Oh, Professor, are you going to desert me at Belize?"

"Yesterday, Joe, I had about made up my mind to put you in charge of the steward when we got there. To-day, I don't know what to say."

"Do not abandon me. I can not make you magnificent offer of money: you care not for money. But will you come — because — because — I love you?"

Here the lad broke down. The Professor was moved.

"Joe, my boy, I appreciate what you have just said. Now I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I have business at Belize. If I can arrange it, I'll come; but if I can not, I will try to get some first-class man to take my place and see you safe home. In any case, I will come back to see you to-morrow morning. And now, suppose we begin with our Catechism."

Whether the illness of the night before had anything to do with it or not, this is certain, that

Joe got so interested in his Catechism that he lost interest in everything else including meals.

There was much excitement on board when at four o'clock land was sighted. Belize, the capital of British Honduras, was in sight. All around coral-islands, abounding in mangrove bushes, jeweled the Caribbean Sea. Belize was in sight, but the way thither owing to the shallows was tortuous, and it took two hours to make a distance, as the bird flies, of six or seven miles.

The Professor's hand was pressed regretfully by every one on the boat. Giving the unhappy boy a cordial farewell, he descended thoughtfully into a rude rowboat. Leavetaking is often sad. As the boat pulled away, he raised his head. Leaning over the rail, Joe was straining wistful eyes after him.

"Good-by, Joe," he shouted gaily.

"Good-by, Professor," cried Joe, bravely trying to catch the tone of his tutor. "I will see you in — in —"

A spasm passed over the child's face. Bowing his head in a sort of despair, he wept.

"Good gracious," muttered the Professor, bowing his head, "it makes me feel *sick.*"

And then he raised a smiling face, a brave face to the Carib skipper, the Carib oarman and what of the population of Belize loungers on shore watching the arrival of passengers and the mails

CHAPTER IX

THE PROFESSOR MAKES THE ACQUAINTANCE OF A DELIGHTFUL BOY AND RECEIVES ONE OF THE SHOCKS OF HIS LIFE

It was a little after nine o'clock the next morning when the Professor, radiant with joy and life and smiles, stepped briskly over the bridge that spans the Belize River. Always in good spirits, he was at this particular moment in a state of joyous exaltation. In his eyes and in his mien a close observer might read that unknown adventure dashed with danger was beckoning him on. The streets, as the Professor passed the fish-market and turned toward the long line of boats at the landing, were alive with people, cheerful, gay, leisurely. The pedestrians, the Professor noted, were walking with measured movement. No one was in a hurry. Carib and Creole, American and Englishman, Malay and Mexican — all adopted the same slow pace, all transacted whatever business they had in hand with a deliberation which would indicate that time was no object. Over all, the tropical sun, with a freshness, a newness, a brightness as though it had just that morning come a direct creation from the hand of God, shed a tropical heat and dazzling sunshine.

"My! Aren't these people slow!" soliloquized the Professor. "Not one of them in sight is averaging two miles an hour." And keeping up his American gait, he made his way briskly along the shore, feeding his vision on the beautiful horse-shoe bay and keeping an eye on the long line of shipping.

Suddenly he pulled out his handkerchief and wiped his streaming face. He was bathed in perspiration. "Ah! there's a reason," he reflected, falling into a slower rate of speed. "No man can walk fast here, I see, with comfort. No doubt, if we North Americans lived here, we'd be just as slow as these people."

A soft-voiced, keen-eyed Creole boy, standing near a keel-bottomed rowboat, noticed the Professor wiping his face.

"You walk American," he observed, returning the Professor's smile. "American walk is not good here, and you are without umbrella. Sun very hot."

"You're right, Sunny South," returned the Professor; "I understand now the value of an umbrella in these parts. Either it rains or it does not rain. If it rains, you want it against the wet. If it does not rain, you want it against the sun."

"I fear not the sun," said the youth, whose garb consisted of an ancient straw hat, a shirt that was a thing of infinite tatters and a pair of pants which by no means extended their protection to his richly bronzed knees.

"You're entirely too careless about your complexion, Sunny South. But what I wanted to

ask when you intrigued me into this delightful conversation was, do you run that boat?"

"No, sah, I rows it."

"Ah, you rows it. Are you a good oarsman?"

"I am very good, sah," replied Sunny South, smiling a revelation of perfect teeth, two lines of snow surrounded by chocolate. "You would please to hire my service?"

"How much to bring me out to the mail?"

The Professor after one night had learned one of the customs of the country. The ship from New Orleans to the inhabitants of Belize is "the mail."

"A quarter, sah."

"It is a bargain. Now get busy." Saying which the Professor leaped into the boat, seated himself in the stern and caught in a practiced hand the tiller ropes.

The boy with an alertness and agility foreign to his surroundings, gave the boat a shove, leaped in, caught up the oars and rowed with an energy and a skill which brought a bright smile of commendation from the gay passenger, in return for which the oarsman revealed those perfect shining teeth to which the tropical sun did full justice. "You're a wonderful oarsman for your years, young Ivories."

"I thank you," returned the youthful Creole, redoubling his exertions to such effect that his only shirt burst into so many tatters that the covering it was supposed to afford grew almost into an unbroken series of vacancies.

The Professor smiled more than ever; he wished to contemplate at greater length the lad's

glorious teeth. As to the boy, the spirit indeed was willing, but the pace was too much for him. His breath came quicker and quicker, until very shortly he was panting.

"Look here, Sunny South," said the Professor, "if I had teeth and a mouth like you, I think I'd devote my entire life to smiling. I can smile, but not like you. As to rowing, you're wonderful for your age. When I was a boy I couldn't come near you. But now, suppose we change."

The Creole jumped up and tripped lightly over to the stern. No American boy could have attempted the like performance without falling overboard. The Professor was at home in a boat; nevertheless his motions as he moved from the stern to his new position were careful and measured.

"Now, Sunny South," announced the Professor as he took a stroke which seemed to wake the boat up and put it on its tiptoes, "if you stop smiling for one moment till we reach the mail, I'll throw an oar at you."

The boat to the music of the boy's laugh shot over the waves.

"Where you learn row at?" asked the boy, fixing large serious eyes on the oarsman.

"Go on and grin. More — more — that's it. I should have thrown an oar at you as I promised."

"You teach me, sah?"

"You don't need teaching, Sunny South. When you grow up and get strong every time you take a stroke you'll lift the boat clear out of the water."

This picture was too much for the lad. He laughed till he slipped from his seat, and kicked his heels into the air in an ecstasy of joy. When he recovered himself and the tiller ropes, there was not a vestige of his shirt upon his mahogany torso.

"Got any more shirts like that, Sunny South?"

"My mother, she have the other one at the wash. She wash one shirt every week."

"Is that your entire wardrobe?"

"One shirt at a time, sah, is enough."

"And where did you get that hat?"

"I inherit it, sah, from my father. Very good hat."

"I don't know about the hat; but there's a fine boy under it."

"I hope," said the Creole, "once again and many times to see you. Hire my boat when you will; the price of the hire does not matter — to you."

"Most of the time I have no money, Mr. Skipper."

"When you have no money, come anyhow. I like watch you row and hear you make fun. Do I wait for you at the boat? Do you return to Belize?"

"No, Chocolate Cherub, I'm going farther south."

"And you no come back?"

"Smile, you Cherub, smile. Yes, I hope to return in a week or two. And if your boat is around, I'll use it."

"Then I not wait for you?"

"I reckon not. Ah, here we are. It's a pleasure to give you this quarter. Do you like candy?"

"Oh, yes, sah."

The Professor took out of his pocket a handful of caramels.

"Here, take these," he said. "And save up these chocolate caramels to eat when your friends are watching you."

"Why, sah?"

"You see, they match your beautiful complexion, and you'll be eating in style. Good-by, God bless you," he concluded, and giving the beaming Creole a warm hand shake, he climbed up the ladder to the accompaniment of delighted and delightful laughter.

He had scarcely put foot on deck, when the steward, wearing an anxious look, hurried toward him.

"Where's the boy?" he cried.

"Oh, I sent him off, told him not to wait. There he goes now," answered the Professor, pointing to the shirtless youth.

"No, no; you misunderstand. Where's Joe?"

"Joe?" echoed the Professor. "Isn't he here?"

"My God!" exclaimed the steward. "Read that," and he handed the Professor a slip of yellow paper.

"The bearer, Miss Attilia Rivera, is authorized to take Joe to shore immediately. I wish to show him the town, and will be responsible for his safe return. PROFESSOR THOMAS."

No sooner had he read these lines, than rushing over to the guard and putting two fingers into his mouth he emitted a whistle, high, shrill, piercing. The young Creole turned his head at once, caught the Professor's eye, understood his gesture, and, nothing loath, swung around for the ship once more.

"When did this come?"

"At a quarter to nine this morning. A young woman brought it. We tried to question her, but all we could get out of her was 'I spik no English.'"

"And the boy?"

"We let him go with her at ten minutes to nine."

"He's gone almost an hour then. When do you sail?"

"In one hour."

"Wait a minute, Sunny South," said the Professor to the young Creole, who had just come aboard. "This is terrible," he continued, addressing the steward. "The boy has been kidnapped!"

And for the moment the Professor lost his smile.

CHAPTER X

THE BEGINNING OF AN ADVENTURE IN WHICH FIGURES A LITTLE WHITE HANDKERCHIEF

"SAY," cried the Professor after a moment's pause, "have you much influence with the Captain?"

"Can't say I have."

"Does the Captain know the Mayor of New Orleans?"

"No; the Cap's a new man. He took charge three months ago. He is from Newfoundland."

The Professor groaned.

"But I'll tell you who has a big pull with our Captain."

"Who?" cried the Professor eagerly.

"The ship's doctor; and I've got a pull with him."

"Fine! Now, you tell the Doctor that I want to find Joe. Of course, I may fail. But I'll lose no time. Hold the vessel back for three hours. If I get him I'm coming too. I'm going to see that poor little fellow all the way home."

"Perhaps we can fix it," said the steward. "The Captain is hardheaded, but we'll try. Say, go on after that boy. If we don't get the Captain, I've something else up my sleeve. Go on; I'll

see you through. This boat won't start till three o'clock."

As the Professor returned to the rowboat, and, after adjuring his youthful partner to smile for his life, took the oars and sent the boat spinning at a rate of speed such as it had never before achieved, the steward went in search of the doctor. During this quest he contrived to whisper into the ear of various underlings. Four of the stokers disappeared from the vessel within a few minutes and those who remained suddenly changed their northern manner of activity to something more befitting the tropics. In a word the boat would not be ready to proceed for several hours, although the Captain, it should be added, curtly refused the request.

"It's all the same in Dutch," remarked the steward to the Doctor as they left his presence. "I'll have to go and employ new stokers and won't have time to see these fellows here do their work. I'm afraid they will not be able to start till three."

Then the steward winked and the Doctor put his finger to the side of his nose.

"Sunny South," said the Professor, as the drops of sweat rolled down his face, "I'm in trouble."

"I am sorry, sah. If I can help —"

"That's just what I am coming to. You may be able to help me, and I want to engage your services for at least three hours, including your boat. You'll get a dollar at the end —"

"I will spend half of my money in a shirt — it is second-hand but almost good as new."

"And if you do the kind of work I expect of you, Sunny South, because I know you're quick and bright, I'll buy you a brand new shirt."

"Thank you, sah," said the Creole, rolling his eyes.

"And if you're very, very good — and that's what I expect of you — you'll get an extra dollar. Total, two dollars and one shirt."

"I delight to work for you, sah. Tell me what to do and I will do it."

"Listen, Sunny South; last night I left in that boat, the *Esmerelda,* a little boy about ten years of age. His name is Jose Maria Escobal — I call him Joe — and his father is President of the Republic of Escadilla in South America. I had him in charge from the time we left New Orleans until last evening. There was a man on the boat who, it seemed, wanted to kidnap the boy."

"Why, sah?"

"It looks as though he is a political enemy of the boy's father. Probably it is the man who tried to be re-elected president and failing was banished. And what's more, this man, who calls himself Señor Pasquale, seems to have some confederates."

"Some what, sah?"

"Men who are working with him to get that boy. The worst of it is I don't know who they are. Joe begged me last night to see him all the way home. I had no intention of going farther than Belize; but on account of something that happened after midnight our last night out, something that made me think there were several men on the boy's trail, I made up my mind to try and

arrange matters at Belize so that I could see him through. Well, I did succeed in arranging matters, and a while ago I started with you to tell the boy that I would stay with him. When I got on board, he was gone."

"Drownded, sah?"

"No; kidnapped. It seems a young woman came aboard the mail about an hour and a half before I did. She had a note signed Professor Thomas, and the steward thought I had written it. The note gave the woman's name as Miss Attilia Rivera. Did you ever hear of any one of that name?"

"No, Professor."

"I supposed so. It's not her name, most likely. Well, anyhow, she went off with him in a rowboat, and that's all that's known."

"How did the boy look, Professor?" asked the Creole, his eyes rolling in excitement.

"He's rather small for his age. His legs are a bit uncertain — wobbly. When excited or distressed he turns in his toes. He wrinkles his nose very frequently, a small pug nose. His complexion is much lighter than yours, in fact it is the color of coffee with lots of cream in it. He has a few freckles, mostly on or about his nose. He stands when excited, very erect, throws out his chest, and holds his head back. He is dressed in a white suit, knickerbockers, coat, a shirt striped red and white, a red flowing tie, and on his head is a dainty little Panama hat which you can crumple in your hand almost as though it were a handkerchief."

"I can almost see him, Professor."

"I was forgetting his mouth. It is rather large, the teeth are good and regular and white, but not near so good as yours."

At this there was an exhibition of Creole teeth that brought back the troubled Professor's smile once more.

"His face, Sunny South — and just keep that grin going, won't you? — is rather oval than round. His chin undeveloped. But his upper lip — ah! He can curl it in scorn, and he curls it pretty often. Black eyes, with silken lashes beautifully penciled and very, very black curved eyebrows complete the picture."

"Any rings, Professor?"

"I really didn't notice. But there's one thing I was forgetting — his handkerchief. If there's one thing Joe is vain about, it's his handkerchief. He takes a fresh one each day, and puts it in the upper pocket of his little coat with one corner artistically sticking out. On that corner there is stitched in a beautiful red and blue monogram — the initials of his name with something like a coat of arms."

"He barefoot — like me?"

"Ah! I'm glad you asked. I'm not much at description. He wears black silk stockings and black low quarter shoes; and from the time he gets up till after breakfast, he is spick and span. And now, Sunny, what do you think we ought to do?"

The Creole rolled his eyes and nursed one bare leg.

"Oh, I know. I will go among the boats and find out what boat came in a while ago with a

woman and a boy of ten, rather small for his age."

Here to the amazement of the Professor, the boy repeated almost word for word the description just set down.

"My! but I'm lucky to have a boy like you working for me. I wish I had your memory. Say, tell me your name."

"Alphonse Liguori Philip Anthony Jones," returned the boy, almost bursting with delight.

"Well, I'm going to call you Alf. You may call me Professor. You're a Catholic, too."

"It is my ambition, Professor, to be the Defender of the Faith."

At this stage of the conversation, they were touching land.

"Where can I get a telephone, Alf?"

The boy, fastening the boat with untropical energy, pointed to a house near-by which, taking into account difference of climate and customs, was very much of the nature of one of our country grocery stores.

"Get busy with the boatmen, Alf, while I ring up the hotels. Keep along the shore-line so I can find you."

Alf needed no reminder. He was off before the Professor had fairly finished.

The Professor at the cost of several nickels rang up all the listed hotels of the town. Fifteen minutes were thus wasted; for no hotel official could give any information concerning a South American boy. He hung up the receiver with a sigh, and leaving the shop, ran his eyes along the shore-line. It was not difficult to dis-

cover Alf. Two squares or more away, the ardent Creole was showing as swift a pair of heels for a boy as ever arrested the astonished eyes of the native population. He was on his way back to the Professor.

"The boy has found out something. He's worth his weight in gold. I say, sir," he added aloud, addressing the clerk, "will you kindly come out here one moment? Thank you for coming. You see that boy breaking his neck to get here?"

"I know him well."

"His size, age and so forth?"

"I know all."

"Got an outing shirt to fit him?"

"Oh, yes! Look!" and the clerk picked up from the counter an orange creation.

"How much?"

"One dollar."

"Here's your money. No: you needn't wrap it up."

The Professor took the gaudy garment out of the clerk's hands, and, much to that gentleman's unconcealed astonishment, removing pins and unbuttoning a few buttons, held it till Alf came running into his arms. Over the boy's head went the shirt, into the sleeves slipped his arms, and within less than three seconds under the quick hands of the Professor he was fully clothed and more respectable in appearance than he ever had been since the day of his baptism.

"Talk, Alf, talk! What do you know?"

"There is a boatman, friend of mine. He row out a lady, he know her not, to the mail; and he

row her back with a little boy. He describe him; it is the same."

"And where did they go?"

"They went along the street on which is the Governor's house — he saw them. And before they get to the Governor's house they turn into the first street. I know the street. I have friends there. Come quick."

The two started at once at a speed which was something between running and fast walking.

"I thank you, Professor, very much for the shirt. It is all new and of a beautiful color. I love it so much, I should like never to take it off."

"It will need washing you know, Alf."

"Oh!" exclaimed the youth a moment later as they turned into the street whereon faced the Governor's mansion; "there across the way I see a friend of mine. Wait till I ask."

For a few seconds Alf was engaged in excitedly questioning a boy slightly smaller than himself. He returned shaking his head sorrowfully. There was no news.

"Do you know any woman on this street, Alf?"

"Yes; many."

"Now, can't you think of some of them who sit by their windows observing everything that goes on in the street?"

"That's true of very many — very many — there's one right there now. She a friend of mine. She is the first cousin of my god-father."

Alf stopped at a window they were passing, whereupon a wrinkled old woman showed her face.

"Good morning," said the boy in Spanish. "You see a woman with a nicely dressed boy, all in white, except colored shirt, black stockings and low black shoes, pass here?"

"I did; I saw him with the woman. She was holding his hand. He was dressed most beautifully, and he held his head as though he were a scion of nobility. They passed right by this house."

"That's the pair I'm looking for —"

"What is it?" asked the venerable woman. "Tell me all about it."

"I will tell you all later. My friend who is a most learned professor and myself are at present much too busy. And did you notice where they went?"

"Yes; I ran out to the street to take a look at that boy. They went up for about one hundred feet, and then turned into a house."

"Do you know where they turned?"

"Yes."

"Oh, Professor," cried the lad in English, "it is good news I have. My friend here saw them. They walked past here, and then turned into a house up the street. She knows the house. I will ask her to come and show it."

"Talk to the lady with this, Alf," said the Professor, passing over a bright quarter of a dollar.

"Lady," said the youth, "my friend is sorry to put you to trouble. But he begs you to bring us to the house they entered. And for your trouble, he begs to thank you from his heart and

to accept from him this beautiful shining quarter of a dollar."

The old woman took the money first, hid it at once, came out smiling and led the way.

"This," she said presently, "is the house which they entered."

"Thank you, lady."

It was a frame structure built on simple lines. The Professor knocked. A middle-aged woman threw open the door. Behind her stood a barefooted girl of fourteen, her kinky hair, flat nose and thick lips redeemed by an expression of benevolence and good humor.

"Beg pardon, ma'am, for troubling you," the Professor began. "But may I ask what became of those two people, a boy and a young woman, who were seen to enter here an hour or two ago?"

"No spik Ingleece," answered the woman.

"You talk to her, Alf. I'll save up my Spanish for the present."

While the Creole youth burst into what sounded like a flow of oratory, the Professor turned his attention to the girl. She held in her hand a scrubbing-brush, and was clearly the slave of the establishment. In answer to the Professor's smile, she returned the most wholehearted of grins. As he subsequently learned, she was a really fine Catholic girl, a Carib who, owing to the death of her parents, had come from Stamn Creek to Belize to earn her livelihood as a domestic.

"Professor," said the boy after further conversation with the woman, "it is true that the

boy did come in here with that lady. They wanted to make inquiries about some house on this street. But the woman here did not know the house and so they went out again."

The listening Carib's eyes grew large as the boy spoke.

"Try and find out from her, Alf, which way they went."

The Professor as he waited took out a dime.

"Here, little girl," he said kindly, "buy yourself some candy."

Little did he realize what a tremendous event in her life was the present of ten cents. The child for her services was given board, clothing — such as it was — and lodging. This was the first money of her own she had received since reaching Belize six months before.

"Professor, the woman here make solemn declaration that the boy and the lady turn back. They did not go farther. She say they were going toward the river."

"Thank her, Alf. I'm afraid we have lost the trail. Good-by, Ma'am," he continued, bowing, "and good-by, little girl."

The Carib bowed low, concealing in the action a face running over with joy.

"Now, Alf, what do you think?" The door was closed and they were standing in the street. Sidewalks are a luxury in British Honduras.

"I think, Professor, that she lie."

"Oh, you do? Why?"

"Because if they went back, my friend who brought us to this house would have seen them. No; they did not go back."

"Perhaps, Alf, they are somewhere in that house yet."

"I am sure, Professor."

"Well, I'm not. I wish I were. It seems to me that the woman who kidnapped Joe went there to throw us off the scent."

"Shall I make exploration?"

"Hssh!" came a sharp voice.

The Professor turned in the direction of the sound. At a small window of the house which they had left, the Carib girl, her face a complexity of emotions — terror, eagerness, joy — stood beckoning violently with one hand, holding the forefinger of the other to her lips.

"What is it?" whispered the Professor, slipping over on tiptoe.

"They were here — they went through by back way to next street — the woman pay my mistress a dollar of silver to say they did not go through. I tell you this for I like you."

The Professor just had time to slip her a quarter of a dollar when the ebony vision was transfigured into rampant joy and, in the very act of transfiguration, disappeared.

"Alf, that girl is just wonderful. She tells me that our two friends entered this house and went out the back way. What do you make of that?"

"They have made escape to the next street. I know the street. Come on."

"Now," observed the Professor as they walked to the nearest corner and turned, "it may be that they have gone much farther than the street we're going to."

"Who knows, Professor? Maybe."

"However, here's the way it looks to me, Alf. I am going to put myself in the place of that woman kidnapper. Now if I were running off with Joe and didn't want any one to know the house where I was going to take him, I would avoid entering the place of concealment by the front way, in which case people would see me. If that's the way this kidnapper looks at it, she may have entered that house we were in so as to get the boy in one of these houses on this street without being seen. The next question is which house it may be."

"That's it, sure, sah."

"Here let's cross the street and take a look at those houses in any of which Joe may be a prisoner."

Five structures, the middle one opposite the home of the grateful Carib, fronted them. The first, second and third houses were very humble affairs of one story. The fifth house was a trifle better in its appointments. But the fourth was rather pretentious. It was broader, a story higher, and up to the second story flanked on front and sides by a trellised porch. It was upon this house that the two, after a brief inspection of the others, fastened their attention.

"Look, Professor," whispered the keen-eyed Creole, "second-story window on right side. See something white?"

The Professor brought out a small pair of field-glasses which he had been using frequently during the voyage.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "That's the boy's handkerchief. I thought so before I used these glasses. Now I know it. I can even make out the blue and white of the monogram."

CHAPTER XI

JOE'S PART OF THE ADVENTURE

WHEN the son of the President of the Republic of Escadilla got word that eventful morning that Professor Thomas had sent for him, he was pleased beyond measure. The steward had his doubts; not so the boy.

"How do you know the Professor wrote it?" asked the steward.

"It is so like him. He most kind man. He desires to show me the city and buy me candy and other things. My father, sir, is the Pres — Oh, I wish to go."

The young woman, apparently of Spanish blood, now took a hand in the conversation.

"The Professor," she said, addressing herself in the Spanish language to Joe, "told me to tell you that he would have come himself, only he had important business which he hopes to have finished by the time we reach shore. He is the guest of the most prominent man in town — a man of pure Spanish blood."

"I am of pure Spanish blood myself. I must go."

"And the gentleman is anxious to meet a boy who is not only dear to the Professor, but is also the son of the President of the Republic of Esca-

dilla. He knows much of your father, and thinks him a most remarkable man."

"He is right: my father is most remarkable. Oh, I want to go so badly."

"And this man," continued the woman, "takes great pleasure in setting up a fine luncheon at ten o'clock in your honor. He has chosen an early hour, so you may return to the boat before noon when it sails."

"Oh! I certainly will go. Dear sir," continued the delighted lad, "I have had words with this lady, and all is right. I will go."

It would have taken a stronger character than the steward to withstand Joe. The permission was reluctantly given, whereupon, with a series of joyous whoops, the boy darted for the state-room, clapped on his Panama, and, his hand clasped in the stranger's, made his way down to the waiting rowboat, so impetuously as almost to precipitate his fair escort into the bay.

The passage from the mail to the landing was delightful. The woman poured into the child's eager ears a description of the prospective luncheon; the promoter of a Barmecide feast makes no account of expense, and revels in number and variety of dishes.

When they touched solid ground, she said:

"Now, Joe, the Professor told me to instruct you that there may be enemies of your father about. To hurt him they might capture you. So you are to walk very quietly till we get to the gentleman's house."

"The Professor is most prudent. I will try to excite as little notice as possible."

Joe, it should be known, spoke Spanish easily and correctly.

They proceeded for some minutes quickly, silently.

"In order to throw any enemy of your father off your trail, Joe, I have a very good plan. We shall enter this house before you, and go out the back way. Then once more by the back way we shall enter the Spanish gentleman's house; so that no one will be able to follow us."

"It is an excellent plan," commented the guileless lad. "Such tricks are good for me to learn. I may use them with profit when I become president."

Having effected their entrance, Joe listened with intense interest to the two Spanish women, and gazed with artless wonder at the Carib slave. His lips curled with contempt in reply to the poor girl's smile of welcome. The boy, despite his professor's influence, was still haughty, still contemptuous of honest poverty and menial labor. The girl lost interest in him from that moment.

"This boy," said Joe's companion, "is the son of a famous man. There are wicked men seeking to capture him. Therefore, I ask you to allow us to go out at the back entrance of your house, so that I can conduct him to the home of a dear friend without observation."

"The house is yours, Señora."

"Ten thousand thanks. And," here she held up a silver dollar; American money, it should be observed, was current almost as much as Eng-

lish in Belize, "in accepting this, you will give me your solemn promise that if any person comes to inquire about the boy here, you will tell them that the boy did enter your house but went out again and retraced his steps."

"This dollar," said the woman graciously, "will serve to remind me of the promise I now solemnly make."

Stealthily, cautiously, the boy and his companion made their way into the back yard.

"Follow me, Joe; stick close to my side."

The woman, not without some difficulty, contrived to make her way in the rear of the houses, the space between them being cluttered up with "tins" and other refuse.

"Here," she said at length, throwing open the back gate of a porch. "Enter."

Joe took a glance at the house. To him it was imposing. He followed with cheerful confidence.

"We shall go upstairs directly to the gentleman's sitting-room."

"Is the Professor up there?" asked the boy.

"Yes — or, if he has not yet completed his business, he will be soon. Go ahead, I will follow you."

The stairway, as is quite common among two-story houses of British Honduras, was outside the house proper. The woman in the act of speaking caught Joe rather roughly and shoved him toward the steps, whereat the lad drew himself up, dusted with his open hand the place on his arm upon which she had laid the hand of rudeness, and turning about said:

"I am not in the habit of suffering anybody to lay hands upon me. I am pure Spanish. My father is the President of —"

"A thousand pardons, Joe," explained the woman, whose air of amiability was fast disappearing, "but I thought I saw a man watching us from the street. Hurry or we may be discovered."

The boy, waving his hand as an expression of forgiveness, stepped briskly upward. Arrived at the end of the flight, he found himself facing a corridor which divided the upper floor into two. On each side were three doors.

"Now we're safe," said the woman. "Here, this way, boy."

Taking his hand, she moved swiftly to the middle door on their left, and throwing it open, pushed him in. Too interested to resent her want of deference the lad cast eager eyes about the room. It was long and narrow, fitted up rather sparingly. There was a bed nearest the door, a wash-stand and a few chairs. It did not look at all like the sitting-room of a great Spanish gentleman. Most disconcerting of all to Joe, Professor Thomas was not there.

"Where is the Professor?"

"He may not yet have finished his affairs; but I will go and bring the Spanish gentleman. Be seated, boy."

She paused, gazed at him with an air of triumph, and turning let herself out.

Joe was not wanting in power of observation. It came home to him that his companion had changed somewhat in her attitude toward him

since their arrival at the foot of the stairway. Her deference, her friendliness had lessened perceptibly. For the first time his suspicions were aroused. He ran over to the window and looked out. Six feet below him was a stout beam, one of the supports of the trellised porch. It was, he judged, nearly a foot thick and nine feet in length. If the worst came to the worst, he could let himself down the beam. The top of the porch itself was about ten feet from the ground. Next, he returned to the other end of the room and softly turned the door knob. He pushed gently outward, he pulled inward; then the sweat of terror broke out on his face. He was locked in.

He tried the door again with more force. It rattled, but did not yield. The noise must have been heard without; for there sounded almost immediately upon his ears the clapping of a door and heavy footfalls. They — his enemies — were coming.

"Help," he cried and bounded for the window. He got both legs over the sash, and was letting himself down supported by his hands when three men broke into the room. He was almost ready to let go his hold; but he had to look down to get his bearings. If he failed to light on the beam, he would fall some seventeen feet. Before he could quite adjust himself, the foremost man caught him under the arm pits and swung him back into the room.

"Help — murd—" His screams were brought to a sudden stop by the hand of his captor placed rudely over his mouth. Bursting with rage the boy kicked and scratched. He had reached the

sensitive part of the fellow's knee and left a long red line on his cheek, when the other two men came to the rescue. One seized his hands, the other his legs, while the injured one in tones as earnest as they were low gave a fluent exhibition of profanity in a Southern tongue.

"We can't trust this little devil alone," he went on. "I thought Dolores said he had not the least suspicion."

"He just happened to find out he was locked in," said the second villain. "That gave the whole thing away. He's got to be kept quiet till the ship sails; and he's got to be kept in this room. Let's tie him up; then we can go on with our game."

It took little time to tie the boy securely. A gag was put in his mouth and carefully fastened; his arms were tied behind him; his legs so wrapped that he could not possibly move. They left him helpless on the floor — helpless save that he could roll over. The poor boy, once his rage had cooled and fear of what might happen possessed his mind, composed himself to earnest prayer. It was not vocal prayer; he could not speak; but from his heart he addressed the Queen of Heaven and St. Joseph, and his patron saints. The tears rolled down his cheeks; he could not brush them away. Oh, how he missed Professor Thomas. How good he was, how kind: and with all his goodness, so cheerful and gay. The Professor feared nothing but sin.

Sin! How careless he had been in so many things, how proud, how wilful, how conceited. Three days of intimacy with Professor Thomas

had given his soul a new orientation. Before meeting him, the boy had gone his way perfectly satisfied with himself. Now, he was humbled and changed. Mindful of his tutor's discourses on Christian doctrine, Joe endeavored to make an act of perfect contrition. But his prayers were not to last long. A sharp sting on the neck called him from prayer to patience. The mosquitoes of British Honduras are not like our modest American mosquitoes, who do their blood letting in the dark. Day and night are all one to the tropical variety. They do not observe the rules of the game. The room in which Joe lay bound and gagged seemed to be a chosen gathering place of these pesky little creatures. They were gathered there in goodly numbers, and they were all, it would seem, hungry. In vain, did the lad wriggle and toss: he was at their mercy. The hour that followed was the cruelest in his little life. But Joe gritted his teeth. He would endure, he would be brave, he would be like Professor Thomas.

CHAPTER XII

THE END OF THE ADVENTURE

"LOOK you, Alf," said the Professor, "we've got to act and act quick. That porch is not more than ten feet high. Strange! there's nobody around. What's become of all the people?"

"It is ten o'clock — the breakfast hour."

The natives of Belize, be it observed, have a strange custom — strange, that is, to us Northerners. They arise at early dawn. Business is at high tide between five and six and continues at high tide until ten o'clock. Then everybody goes off to his morning meal.

"So much the better," said the Professor. "Now, come on. You see that hook up there right next to the girder running under the second window. You give me a back — there put your head down, bend your shoulders, put your hands on your knees and hold yourself steady — and wait where you are."

The Professor adjusted the boy to the required position, stepped lightly on the steady back, and, grasping the hook, raised himself up by sheer muscle. It was the work of a second to get hold of the beam, of another to stand erect, and in a few quick steady steps, he stood at the open window and catching the sill with both hands raised

himself upward and glanced cautiously into the room. One quick glance was enough. With a muscular effort worthy of a professional gymnast, he almost vaulted in. Quick action was necessary.

This is what he saw: Lying on the floor, his face and neck bleeding, his hands and wrists swollen, securely gagged, helpless, Joe, victim of the deadly mosquitoes, was as sorry a sight as had ever fallen under his notice. Beside him, her back luckily turned toward the window, stood a woman holding in one hand a tray upon which was the meagre breakfast intended for the boy, in the other a key, which the Professor judged, fitted the door.

With one bound, the Professor was at the woman's side clutching the key with his right hand and in a continuous movement the gag from the boy's mouth.

The woman opened her mouth to shriek; it was not fairly opened when it was filled by the same gag. Then the Professor with incredible swiftness tied her hands behind her, locked the door, seized the boy, trussed as he was, and made for the window. Even as, holding Joe in one arm, he reached the beam, there was a pounding at the door he had just locked. The woman was giving the alarm by kicking against the panels.

"By the time they break in the door," he reflected, "we'll be on our way." And the Professor, as he walked the beam with certain step, grinned. His air of anxiety was gone.

"Here, Alf," he whispered, "get ready to catch hold."

Getting one knee within the hook — a trick he had often achieved on the horizontal bar — he hung down and lowered Joe into the eager arms of Alphonse. It was easy for him to complete his own descent.

"Here, you little bummer," said the Professor, lapsing in the excitement of the moment into the language of his youth, "run for your life to the boat, and have everything ready for a quick getaway. Now, Joe, old boy, we've got to run for it. Halloa! They've broken in that door more quickly than I expected." This remark was provoked by the appearance at the window of three snarling men. One of them, in fact, as the Professor spoke leaped out of the window, stood on the beam, and, while the Professor cut the ropes that bound the boy, he straddled it. "Safety first," was his motto. The other two had disappeared. There followed the clattering of feet on the stairway.

"I'm stiff, Professor."

"I know it," answered the elder, picking the boy up in his strong arms and dashing after the fleet-footed Creole already a hundred yards in the lead.

Fortunately for our friends, it was the breakfast hour; and the streets were clear. Not even a guardian of the peace was about. A young sprinter in the prime of life carrying in one arm a very small boy with as little inconvenience as though he were grasping a box of candy, apparently in pursuit of a quick-limbed Creole in a shirt gaudy as a sunrise, would have aroused the intense excitement of the entire populace. This

excitement would have been brought to boiling pitch had they seen a middle-aged man of Spanish blood, wearing a sombrero, waving a wicked knife, and hot on the trail of both runners.

By the time Alf had gained the boat, where with quick precision he adjusted the oars and made everything ready for instant departure, the tutor and his charge were hard upon him.

"Be ready to steer, Alf," cried the tutor, jumping in, taking the oars and placing Joe in security at his feet.

Up to this moment, the Professor had been unflagging in his energy. He had not lost a moment. Of a sudden, all was changed. He raised the oars deliberately and, puffing slightly but smiling largely, gazed leisurely toward the shore. The sight seemed to fill him with joy. Fifty yards or so away, the pursuer, still brandishing his knife which glittered in the sun and with mouth wide open, was coming straight toward the boat at such speed as he could muster. He was not a practised runner. Nearer and nearer he came.

"Professor!" shouted Alf, "push out — quick."

"Steady, Alf; you just mind the steering. Don't be frightened, Joe. Above all, don't move."

The Professor took another leisurely survey. The unhappy citizens by this time were awakening to the fact that something of interest was transpiring. Men and women and children — principally children — were actually running to the shore-line.

The pursuer was now within fifteen feet of the boat, and still, oars nicely poised, the Professor, panting hardly at all but smiling more than ever, waited.

Keeping steadily on, the man of the flashing knife within three feet of the boat, took a flying leap. On the instant, the Professor put forth a powerful stroke. As the boat shot out, the man shot in. It was very disconcerting to him, this moving boat. He had not reckoned on such a thing. His stay in the boat in consequence, was for an infinitesimal point of time, then over he went. It was probably the nearest thing to a somersault in his entire career. Indeed, it was a striking backward dive.

When he came to the surface, choking, coughing, spluttering, his knife was gone and his face was plastered with the richest mud of Belize Bay. Now it is well known that this particular bay is the paradise of sharks. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the disconcerted kidnapper made undignified haste to the shore. He had no time to cast his eyes at the young Creole's boat, now well out from the landing.

On the rowboat itself, all was joy. Joe, fastening wondering eyes on the Professor, exclaimed:

"Heavens! but you are a most wonderful joker," and forthwith undertook to kiss his professor's hands, with the result that, as the Professor was rowing hard, the lad was within a little of losing his front teeth.

"Joe," commanded his tutor, "you sit quiet. Joe, thank God, thank God, I'm the happiest man just now in Central America."

"Professor," continued Joe, "in the name of my father who is the President —"

"Yes, yes, Joe."

"Excuse me, Professor — and in the name of my beauteous mother and of my brothers and sisters, I thank you."

"You just tell them they're quite welcome."

"And are you coming with me, Professor?"

"Yes, Joe, I'm going to see you through."

Joe forgot the pain of the mosquito bites; his face grew ecstatic.

"You said just now, Professor, you are the happiest man in Central America; I am the happiest boy."

Meanwhile the young Creole was chuckling continuously. He loved a practical joke: and the particular one played by the Professor was the funniest thing in his experience.

"Here, you, Alf, stop your noise there and come up and shake hands with Jose Maria Escobal, whose illustrious father is the illustrious President —"

"Oh, Professor, please," implored Joe.

"I thought I'd save you the trouble of saying it, Joe," returned the tutor, as Alf, the sure-footed, came hopping over the Professor's knees.

"There, Joe, shake hands with that boy. Without him I doubt whether I could have found you, and even if I had found you, I doubt whether I could have escaped with you."

"I am very happy to shake your hand," said Joe cordially, "and I will reward you."

"That reminds me, Joe; I promised this boy two dollars and one shirt if he saw me through,

and he certainly did. He has earned five. Now you know *I* haven't five dollars to my name."

"Oh, Professor," cried Joe, waving his forefinger before his breast, "all my money given you by my sick tutor is yours. Use it as you will."

They soon reached the *Esmerelda;* and the joy died from the face of Alf. He lost his smile, his shining teeth were shut up in blackness.

"What's the matter, Alf?" inquired the Professor, as he handed the gloomy-visaged boy a five dollar gold piece.

"Professor! take me with you. For wages I care not. I love to work for you. I will be your servant. Let me come."

"Thank you, Alf; but I don't want a servant. Never had one in my life. But if I wanted one, you'd be my choice. But I'm coming back soon, and we'll have many a row on the bay. Good-by and God bless you. You've done a splendid day's work."

The boy shook hands with Joe, then with the Professor. He walked away, paused, then turned.

"Professor," he whispered, "you are a poor man. Receive this piece of gold and spend it on yourself."

The young man looked into the sad, wistful eyes of the Creole. He looked, and he loved. The poor boy, he knew, had never before owned a five dollar gold piece. For a moment his features were convulsed. Mastering himself, he said:

"Alf, if you don't keep that money, I'll never go rowing in your boat again. Good-by."

CHAPTER XIII

JOE, TRAINED IN THE SCHOOL OF ADVERSITY, LEARNS A GREAT LESSON OF LIFE

"JOE, I'm a little worried about those mosquito bites," observed the Professor as the good ship *Esmerelda* steamed south precisely two hours later than the time set by the Captain. "I've had a talk with the ship's doctor and he thinks you are liable to get a touch of malaria. Your tropical mosquitoes are more deadly than those of America. Take this pill — three grains of quinine. I'm going to dose you twice a day for at least one week."

"Quinine I like not," returned Joe; "but coming from your hands —" Here he put the pill in his mouth, swallowed and grinned. "And tell me now, Professor, what you think of the people down here?"

"Joe, I'm delighted. Did you notice that little Creole boy? I'll never forget him. When I first made his acquaintance, he was all in rags. Before we rowed out to this boat, even his rags were gone. And he was so good and willing. He's poor; but he's happy. You don't need fine clothes and money to be able to smile and enjoy God's gifts. As for money, do you know that

he actually wanted me to take back your five dollars and spend it on myself?"

"He likes you very much, Professor; he has most exquisite judgment. My father will send him a gift."

"And," the Professor went on, "there's that little Carib girl."

"Carib girl, Professor?"

"Yes; you must have met her. She was the slave, that is," explained the Professor as he noticed that Joe wrinkled his nose at the unusual word, "the maid of all work in that first house you entered to effect a back entrance."

"Oh!" cried Joe, his aristocratic lip curling, "you speak of that kinky-haired, black of complexion, ugly girl in rags and tatters. I remember her. Very common girl."

"How do you know she's very common?"

"She made smiles at me, at me with whom she had not the honor of introduction, and I — I — snubbed at her."

"Indeed! So you 'snubbed at' her, curled your lip and raised your eyebrows. I can picture you, Joe. Well, it is not your fault that you are not still bound and gagged."

"How mean you, Professor?"

"I mean this: when her mistress told us that you had entered the house and gone back the same way and taken the direction leading to the landing, and when Alf and I thus thrown clean off the scent went out, that brave little girl at the risk of losing her position and of incurring bodily injuries slipped over to a window, caught our attention, and told us that you had gone through

the house and out the back way. If it had not been for that information, I doubt whether we would have found you."

"My father," said Joe, "shall reward her. She must be most wonderful girl. Why was she so kind to me, who snubbed her? I do not understand."

"I'm afraid, Joe, that her kindness was not directed to you at all."

"Why, then, did she reveal?"

"The fact is, Joe, that I met her in the same way as you did when I entered that house to make inquiries. She had a scrubbing brush in her hand, and she looked like a girl who seldom met with any kindness. She treated me as she did you; that is, she smiled at me. Do you know, Joe, that I thought just then that the poor Carib was hungry in two ways — hungry for good food and hungry for any sort of kindness. So I just grinned back, and when I got a chance, I passed her a dime. She was grateful for both; and when she whispered the information that led to our discovery of you, I gave her a quarter. That quarter, Joe, as I am a poor man, I am going to charge to the account of your father, who is the President —"

"I know, I know," laughed Joe, flinging out two hands with ten wriggling fingers. "All my money is yours. But how, Professor, did you pick out the house I was in?"

"That's where my friend the Creole boy comes in. His sharp eye detected your handkerchief fluttering from a window. He pointed it out to me, and with my field-glasses I picked out your

monogram. How in the world did you manage to get your handkerchief fluttering from that windowsill?"

"It was accident. When I discover myself locked in, I rush to the window, and try to escape. I am already out, hanging by my hands when a man, a most wicked man, catch me by the arms and drag me in. I fight, I resist, I kick. The handkerchief got caught in a tiny nail of the window and stuck there; and I knew it not till long after."

"Maybe it was an accident, Joe; but again maybe it was the kindly office of your guardian angel. Yes, my boy, that Carib girl stands for any number of Caribs; and that Creole boy stands for no end of Creoles. They need kindness and love, and instruction in their religion. And I don't want to hear you talking again about people being common. There are, in the sense you use it, no common people. Any one of those people at whom you have the engaging habit of curling up your little nose is so uncommon that Christ shed every drop of His blood to get them a place in heaven. And that's why good men and women leave home and dear ones and the comforts of civilization to gain the hearts of such people, and, having gained them, to present them to Him who died for them on the Cross."

"Would you like to work for them as a missioner, Professor?"

"With all my heart."

"Would you be willing to die for them?"

"If I were not willing," replied the tutor, "I would not wish to be a missioner."

"Professor, tell me: is there anything in this world that is common?"

"That's a puzzler, Joe. Just now, as I look out from this boat on the shimmering water, the blue sky, the blessed sunshine, I can't think of anything that is really common — excepting mosquitoes. No doubt, though, to the angels even a mosquito is something delightfully interesting."

"And Señor Pasquale?"

The Professor frowned.

"Joe, I don't judge him. I'm fighting him; but he may have better intentions than you and I imagine. Only God can read the secrets of the heart."

At this moment, who should appear upon the deck, but Señor Pasquale himself. He swung along airily, jauntily, puffing at a fat cigar. All was well with Pasquale. He held his head high. His smile was the smile of one who had fought a good fight and conquered. He gazed benevolently toward the receding land, removed his cigar and kissed his hands lightly as though sending a cheerful farewell toward friends on shore. Then he turned jauntily, bringing with a slow circling motion, his cigar to his mouth. The cigar halted midway, the smile vanished, his jaw dropped, his eyes protruded when they fell upon the person of the tutor and Joe.

"I — I — thought," he said, recovering himself partially by a mighty effort, "that you both remained at Belize."

"We did come near remaining, Señor Pasquale," said the tutor smoothly. "In fact Joe

was the guest of some people there who are, I presume, personal friends of yours. They were very anxious in their hospitality to keep our young friend over. Indeed, I had some trouble in trying to bring them to part with him. One of them saw us all the way down to our rowboat. He was within a little of entering it after us, but unfortunately for himself, as he jumped in and I pulled out, he missed his footing and described a most artistic back-somersault into the bay, in the performance of which he lost a knife something like the one you had before we left the States."

Don Pasquale, rather mystified by the simple, polite and direct expression of the Professor, threw his cigar savagely into the sea and hastened back to his stateroom.

"I'm afraid," commented Joe's tutor, "that I've spoiled his morning smoke. He certainly is not overjoyed to see us."

"That brings to my mind an item, Professor," said Joe, wrinkling his nose.

"By all means, let me have your item."

"It is this: there were three men in my house of bondage. And one of the three was on this boat all the way from New Orleans to Belize."

"Indeed! What about the other two?"

"They may have been with us also; but I remembered not their faces."

The Professor remained buried in thought for some time.

"It is just as I thought," he said after a short silence. "Pasquale is not alone. He is one of a body of conspirators; and they are willing to

go to desperate lengths to prevent you from reaching Escadilla. Now, the next question is, did all of them, except Pasquale, get off at Belize, or is Pasquale still associated with a group of men now on board. If he is, we are not out of the woods yet. There will be new trouble for us as soon as we land. But anyhow, we have four more days before us, and I fancy that before they pass, we can arrange something."

"Can we not call on help from the police?"

"I thought of the police, Joe, when you were kidnapped. British Honduras, you know, is better policed than most states in the United States of America, which is a reason, I imagine, for the striking fact that it is the only part of Central America which has never known a revolution. Now, if I had called the police, we might have recovered you; but there would have been police court and depositions and the filing of many papers and no end of red-tape, as a consequence of which you'd be in Belize now and probably for a week or two longer. Of course, if I had failed in finding you, I should have been obliged to call on them; and if they had not discovered your whereabouts before night, you would have been spirited away into the bush."

"You wanted, Professor, what you Americans call quick activity."

"Quick action, Joe; yes, that's what we got, too."

At the noon hour, Joe ate with his usual appetite — but there was a change in him. Seated at the same table over which the chief engineer presided, he made it a point to greet the waiter.

"I am glad to see you again," he said, "you were most attentive all the way to Belize. I thank you." He rounded off this declaration with a genial smile.

The waiter was astonished and delightfully embarrassed. It gave him a new angle in regard to the haughty scion of nobility. Joe from that time began to notice that his meals were distinctly better than they had been in the first part of the voyage.

Sitting next to our youth was a simple, rugged, powerfully built old man, whose horny hands and scarred face told the tale of life-long hard labor, and whose dress suggested poverty and an humble manner of life. Joe had, at the first meal after leaving New Orleans, accorded him one slow stare and then turned away with a shrug and lifted eyebrows. He no longer existed so far as the President's son was concerned. But now, he gave him full and courteous attention. His quick, young eyes were on the alert to see that the dingy old man wanted neither salt, nor bread, nor service of any kind. It was refreshing to observe how the object of these attentions changed from dejection to cheerfulness. He was soon smiling; his weather-beaten features took on a sweetness which robed them in an unthought-of beauty. He ventured even upon conversation; and Joe, precocious in that gentle art, gave him the pleasantest half-hour of his voyage.

"You are a fine boy," said the old man at the close of the meal as he beamed upon Joe. "I did not understand you at first."

The tutor watching all this was pleased beyond measure. His eyes danced.

"Shake, Joe," he said, as they left the table. "You are making good. You are really preparing for your first Communion; you'll be ready for it before we reach Escadilla. And if you keep on studying your lessons and behaving as you are now behaving for a few years longer, you'll be fit to be —" here the Professor paused.

"What, Professor? Tell me."

"You'll be fit to be President of Escadilla, or any republic in South America."

Joe blushed; it was a golden moment in his life.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PROFESSOR RESOLVES TO TAKE A DESPERATE CHANCE

By the afternoon of the third day out, Joe was the most popular person on board. He got what he gave. The Professor's words concerning the Creole boy and the Carib girl had thrown a new light on the secret of dealing with others. The boy, henceforth, made it a point to talk with the sailors and with those of the passengers who were poor and humble. He was trying, in love and gratitude, to act as his tutor would act; and he was succeeding. His kidnapping and the details connected with it promised to be the turning-point of his life. It is no exaggeration to say that in a certain sense he adored the Professor. Love is the most wonderful thing in the world, and it was a great love that urged him on. He would be like his tutor. To the no small amusement of the more observant, he carried this imitation to the point of walking and gesticulating and talking like Professor Thomas. The old man's acquaintance fast developed into friendship. Then Joe discovered that Miguel Porta was anything but common. Porta had acted as overseer of bands of laborers in various parts of South America. He had controlled men whose

police records were known in every capital in Europe. He had put down more than one riot single-handed. He had faced dangers of blood and field, and faced them brave and unconquered. Old as he was, his strength was even yet the strength of a giant. And he was not poor at all. He was in comfortable circumstances and yet, when off duty, bashful and retiring. Best of all, so far as Joe was concerned, he knew more about revolutions than the boy himself. For ten years of his early life he had been a soldier of fortune.

"What is the matter with that man whose moustache is so bristling?" Joe asked him on the afternoon of the third day. The two were seated in steamer chairs. Further up the deck stood the subject of the boy's question, whose eyes, nose and cheeks were badly swollen.

"I think," returned Porta, "that he must have offended somebody, and been beaten up in consequence."

It was only later that Joe got the details. They were given him by that most magnificent friend of his, the waiter.

"Say!" said the waiter, "that old friend of yours who sits next to you at table is some fighter, believe me. When it comes to fighting, he's got his weight in wild cats skinned to a fare-ye-well. Did you see that fellow with his eye draped in mourning, and his nose blooming like the last rose of summer?"

"Yes, yes; tell me all," pleaded Joe.

"Well, he said something mean about you in the old gent's hearing. Said you were an upstart and that you and your tutor were a pair of

frauds. That got under the old codger's skin, and he said — they were on deck at the time — 'Take that back, sir, you are speaking of my friend.' The guy gave the old one the glassy eye, and told him to go to — well he gave him bad advice, and he went on to tell the old one to clear out or he'd help him. Then the old one put up his 'dukes.' O boy! but you should have seen the fur fly! It was a sight for sore eyes. Then the old fellow with his fists still doubled glared round at the crowd of men and wanted to know if there was anybody else who thought ill of you. He got no takers."

"My friend Porta," said Joe, "is a very wonderful man."

That evening, Porta, apologizing to Joe for breaking up his conversation with his tutor, called the latter aside.

"Professor Thomas," he said, "I would not disturb you, if I did not consider the matter serious."

"You needn't apologize, Señor Porta. I am glad you called on me. Anything special in the wind?"

"Yes; something very special, touching you and Joe."

"What is it?"

"That little argument I had with that fellow this afternoon —"

"That bloody argument, you mean," laughed the Professor.

"Have it so; well, it got me busy and suspicious. I didn't like that crowd with him. So I began making inquiries. It was just as I ex-

pected. There are eight or ten men on this boat who are determined that you shall not bring the boy to Escadilla."

"So many!" exclaimed the Professor. "I knew that there were at least three besides Pasquale."

"I've counted eight, Professor; and I've kept eyes and ears open. Their plot is simple enough. They intend capturing the boy and holding him as a hostage. His father is to be brought to terms, if he wishes to see his son alive. The terms are, the revocation of the sentence of banishment against Pasquale and some twenty of his followers, and the restoration of their property. Once they return, the rest will be easy. Pasquale will be president in six months."

"I thought it was something like that," said the Professor. "And you have done us a great service in telling me. I was not prepared to deal with so large a number. In fact, I'm a little puzzled as to what steps I should take."

"There's this for certain, Professor; you must not land at any regular stopping place."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean this; you're outnumbered and you are watched. Wherever you get off, they'll get off, too. And remember, you have a wild and deserted country to pass through before you reach Escadilla. You may be safe enough at the ports, you and Joe; you may be safe for some distance into the interior; but once you get into territory where —"

"'Where there ain't no ten commandments,'" suggested the Professor.

"That is a perfect description. Then those fellows will have you at their mercy. They will have no end of adventurers helping them. There's no escape for you. Joe, in a way, will be safe enough. They will take good care of him, because they want to use him as a club against his own father. He will be safe, unless his father refuses to yield to their terms. But I fear, Professor, it may go hard with you. It appears that you have checkmated them twice already. Pasquale as likely as not would kill you. He hates you."

"I'm sure he doesn't love me," grinned the Professor. "But what would you suggest?"

"Look," said the old revolutionist, producing a map. "At two o'clock this morning, or thereabouts, we pass this point of land." Here he laid a horny finger on the map.

"Ah! I see."

"Now, there's a little village there. And it is not more than twenty miles further from Escadilla, than the ship's stopping place which you will reach no earlier than ten o'clock to-morrow morning."

"Oh, I begin to see a light! We'll have a start of eight hours by getting off here. But how can we do it? The *Esmerelda* doesn't stop here. How can we get ashore?"

"Professor, we've got to use influence."

"How? Where?"

"There's the steward, to begin with. He thinks a lot of you. You tell him the case, and he will be with us so that you can get away without any fuss being made."

"Yes; but how far is it from land?"

"Not more than two or three miles."

"And do you expect us to swim?"

Porta smiled.

"I believe you would not fear to try it; but I have with me a small boat. I always travel with it. It has come in handy before. You see, Professor, I've been mixed up in a good many revolutions, and still more feuds. Now, about the time we near this point, the vessel will slow up."

"Who is going to slow it?"

Again Porta smiled.

"There are shoals there, and it's the natural thing to do; but to-night, the *Esmerelda* will be much slower than usual."

"How do you know?"

"I've fixed that part with the chief engineer. The boat will come almost to a stop; and, in the meantime, two of my workmen will have the boat lowered and near the stern. They will let it down when the *Esmerelda* is going at about three knots. I'll be around to give you the signal for slipping down. Have you had experience in sliding down ropes?"

"I've done it," said the Professor.

"So much the better. When you and the boy are safely in the boat, cut the rope and make for the shore. There you can secure horses and start at once for Escadilla."

"Yes, that sounds simple enough. But where on the round earth *is* Escadilla?"

"My draftsman," answered Porta, "is at this moment making out a map for you. We have

been here before. Have you a pocket compass?"

"Oh, yes; I have that."

"Good! Well, with this map and your compass, I know that you will make Escadilla in five or six days."

"Señor Porta, you are an exceptional man. You seem to have foreseen everything. But what about your boat? How are we going to return it?"

Porta snapped his fingers.

"Pooh! You leave it there in charge of the keeper of the general store. Give him my name; he knows me. Excuse me, Professor, for giving so many directions to you who are so much my superior in every way —"

"I take your directions, my friend, as a kitten takes cream. And please don't say another word about my authority; I take off my hat to you; but go on and give me more advice."

"Thank you, Professor. Now about your luggage. You have, say, a five days' trip before you. Take as little as possible; a change or so. Leave the rest in your cabin, and I'll see that it is duly forwarded to Escadilla. The whole thing sounds desperate, Professor; but it's the only way. If you wait till to-morrow when the boat stops, it means, almost certainly, captivity to the boy, and for you, possibly, death."

"It's the boy I'm worrying about," said the Professor simply. "He's got to get home safe. I will go at once to arrange with the steward, then I will talk with Joe, and explain the situation. Then I'll pack up — and then — well, I

don't mind telling you, Señor Porta, I'm going to pray."

"It is good," said the old man.

"And one word more, Señor; there are some acts of kindness that are so big that it is useless to try and express our gratitude. You are doing the biggest kind of a generous thing for me and my dear little charge. May God reward you."

The two men looked at each other for one solemn moment. Then they shook hands fervently in silence, and in silence went their several ways.

CHAPTER XV

IN THE SILENCE OF THE NIGHT

It was a quiet night. The wind, boisterous all day, had died down. A calm, drenched with moonlight, lay over the face of the deep. The deck was deserted. A distant blur, as the vessel proceeded on her way, ploughing through waters that grew white in foam and threw out a phosphorescent glow, slowly grew into distinctness; until one could descry several cocoanut trees in all manner of fantastic shapes along the shoreline. It was a few minutes after two when the speed of the vessel began to lessen. As the minutes went on, the *Esmerelda* almost imperceptibly continued to go slower and slower. At the very beginning of this change in speed, there came upon the deck a man carrying a flash-light. He surveyed the deck carefully, anxiously. Not satisfied with the inspection, he moved about throwing the light into every nook and corner. The steward, for it was he, seemed to be satisfied. He threw out his arms as though giving a signal and disappeared. There ensued an interval of solemn quiet, a quiet emphasized by the churning of the water at the stern and by the chug-chug of the engine.

Just as the moon disappeared behind a pass-

ing cloud, two men barefooted, vigilant, stepped out of the smoking room, and turning their heads here and there as they stepped briskly forward, made for the stern end of the *Esmerelda.* There followed them a man, powerfully built, aggressive, holding himself as though ready to spring upon any enemy. A casual acquaintance would have wondered at the sudden change in the quiet, retiring old man who during the entire voyage shrank from intimacy with every one except a small boy, Jose Maria Escobal. Señor Porta loved danger. He rose to it. He was now McGregor on his native heath. All three stood out in silhouette. Mystery, conspiracy, dark doings had invaded the calm and silent night.

Porta did not go with the two all the way. Standing erect, keeping an eye fore and aft, he watched them, now and then making some speaking gesture, as with practised hands, they adjusted ropes and lowered the boat. They succeeded without a hitch. The sound of the rowboat's impact on the water was smothered by the swishing waves at the stern.

Porta hastened to their side and looked down. He must have been satisfied, for he held up his hands in a gesture at once of satisfaction and dismissal, following which the two vanished. Save for the presence of Porta, all appeared to be as it had been before their appearance.

Porta stood for a few moments straining his eyes landward. Mangrove bushes, black thicknesses of shadow, skirted the shore opposite him for a distance of a quarter of a mile. Beyond that the land was cleared. Along the shore, in

this open space, grew several palms, straight and beautiful, and between them, with a weirdness intensified by the dim light, cocoanut trees, tortured into strange shapes, shapes suggestive of tragedy, by the winds of many a fierce storm. About half a mile south, there gleamed intermittently from behind the trees two dim lights. When Porta had satisfied himself of their presence, he turned quickly toward the smoking-room, and, as he neared it, made a motion with his hands.

Forth issued at the sign, the Professor and Joe, the latter, evidently nervous, walking with uncertain and devious legs. The Professor carried two small traveling bags.

"The coast is clear. Come quick on your tiptoes. Not a sound," whispered Porta. "You see those two lights ashore? Make for them, the village is there."

They were now at the precise point where the rope, fastened securely, held the boat.

"Slide down, Professor; and then I have a contraption here, which one of my men has made for the occasion, to lower Joe. While you are sliding, I'll tie up the boy and have him ready to lower without delay."

While the Professor slung the valises, held together by a rope over his shoulders, and, with a nod eloquent of grateful farewell, caught the rope and went over the side, Señor Porta facing the water so as to keep his eye upon his departing friend's movements, pulled out his "contraption," and set to work at getting it into shape. Joe, meanwhile, was leaning over the rail watch-

ing in fear and wonder his tutor, who was going down hand over hand, as though such a performance were not new to him, which, in point of fact, it was not.

Here then was the situation: The Professor was absorbed in the work of reaching the boat quickly and without noise; Señor Porta was absorbed in getting his somewhat complicated "contraption" into working order; Joe was absorbed in watching the descent of his tutor, who was already half-way down, when, barefooted, bareheaded, there came rushing from a stateroom within a few yards of their position, the man whom, earlier in the day, Porta had disciplined with his good fists. His movements were cat-like. He was making direct for Porta. In his right hand was an ugly knife. He was almost upon the old man when the moon, released from the cloud, enveloped the scene in fairy light. Just then, Porta who had at length solved the mystery of the ropes in his hand, turned. If the movements of the conspirator had been cat-like, those of Porta were the movements of a tiger. His right hand caught the upraised arm of the aggressor, his left found his mouth. Then the two stood rocking and swaying.

Joe gave a low moan. Over the side, in his terror, he shot, catching the rope in both hands and sliding down to his tutor; and as he disappeared over the side, out of the shadows of a stateroom there came dashing toward the combatants the two men who had lowered the boat. They were sorely needed by Porta. To hold at one and the same time an arm with a suspended

knife intended for his heart, and with the other to make it impossible for his enemy to cry an alarm was almost too much even for Porta. Indeed, it would have been impossible had he not succeeded at the outset in getting his hand into the fellow's mouth.

Porta's assistants, then, were none too soon; and their attack was simultaneous. One struck the unfortunate aggressor a terrific blow on the temple, a blow which at once released Porta's cut and bleeding hand and knocked the man unconscious; the other caught the suspended arm and forced it back with a powerful jerk. And then, before Porta and his friends could realize it, the dazed man swayed and tottered.

The Professor and Joe were not yet ready to pull away. Having seated Joe, whose hands were bleeding, in the stern, Professor Thomas said:

"Joe, I must climb back. Perhaps Porta needs my help. Say a prayer for me."

He had just caught the rope in his hands, when he was brought to a pause. Down from above dropped the form of a man, falling with him, but loosed from his grasp, a long knife flashed horridly in the moonlight. Not twenty feet away, plunged the body, rose, sank — and then, some creature of the deep, as it turned, flapped its huge tail above the waters. The body appeared no more. The Professor, filled with awe, looked on the silent sea, the sea so calm and glittering with its myriad secrets of blood and of crime; and he fancied as he looked that a dark stain of

blood incarnadined the spot where the man had disappeared.

"Cut the rope," came Porta's voice from above.

The Professor obeyed, took the oars and rowed for the shore.

"Oh, Professor," whispered the boy, whose teeth were chattering, "what happened?"

"It was a shark, Joe. Let us pray for that poor man's soul."

CHAPTER XVI

THE PROFESSOR MAKES A NEW FRIEND, AND DISCOVERS THAT IN THE MATTER OF GOING TO BED AND ARISING, SOUTH AMERICANS CAN TEACH THE WORLD HOW TO "SPEED UP"

THERE was a long silence, broken only by the oars as they beat the water and the chugging of the *Esmerelda* which, with full steam on, drew away quickly from the scene of the tragedy.

Presently, the Professor observed that Joe's teeth were chattering.

"Come near me, Joe. You're a little nervous, I see. I don't wonder. It is sad that a boy of your age should have to see what we have just seen."

Joe slipped with alacrity from the seat in the stern to the Professor's feet. His confidence at once began to return. Who could be fearful, he reflected, within reach of the Professor's strong arms and confidence-inspiring smile?

"Professor, did you pray for that man?"

"I certainly did, Joe."

"But he was bad, wicked. You saw the knife that fell from his hands as he fell? He was going to stab Señor Porta with it just before he fell over. I saw him. He was the same man

that Señor Porta attacked for making ugly remarks about us."

"Joe, we saw only a few hours of that man's life. Maybe they were the very worst. Perhaps, when he was a little boy like you, he was good and innocent. Perhaps, he started out as a young man with high ideals. Of course, we don't know anything about that, but God does. And God to whom past, present and future are one, sees him not as he is now but as he is taking his whole life into account."

"But, Professor, doesn't God judge us as we are at the moment we die? If we are then in mortal sin must He not condemn us?"

"That's so, Joe; but how do you know he died in mortal sin?"

"He died in the act of trying to do a murder."

"Oh, no, Joe; he died several seconds, perhaps several minutes after. And why could not God in those awful moments before death give him a chance to repent and the grace of making an act of perfect contrition?"

"You think so, Professor?"

"A better man than I is my authority. I had a teacher when I was a boy hardly older than you, who quoted a sentence from Father Faber which I memorized at the time, and have never forgotten. Father Faber says: 'As to those who may be lost, I confidently believe that our Heavenly Father threw His arms about each created spirit, and looked it full in the face with bright eyes of love, in the darkness of its mortal life, and that of its own deliberate will it would not have Him.'"

"I will say another Hail Mary for him, Professor."

"Well, Joe, while we are on this subject, let me say that we need help and guidance from on High. We may have to face danger and trouble and delay; again, all may go well with us. Anyhow, we are going into the unknown. Suppose, then, imitating a custom I know of in certain places in the States, we say together the Litany of our Lady that she may guide and protect us."

The silent sea buried among the things it will give up on judgment day, that sweet solemn prayer uttered by two wayfarers who put into its enunciation all their earnest faith, hope and love.

It was nearing the dawn when they reached land. The settlement stood back from the beach about one hundred yards. Through its length ran a street. Midways towered one house above the other; it was the general store.

"Let's stretch our legs, Joe. Everybody will be up and doing in less than half an hour. If we arouse them now, we may put them in bad humor."

So the two walked briskly up and down the shore till, as the Professor had predicted, the sun presently rose and with it most of the inhabitants.

"Good morning," said Professor Thomas, entering the general store and greeting the proprietor with a pleasant smile. "We are two hungry persons. Could you supply us with crackers and cheese or something on those lines?"

The Professor spoke Spanish badly; Joe was obliged to come to his help.

"You are shipwrecked, gentlemen?"

"No, not exactly," the Professor explained. "We were on the *Esmerelda,* and it occurred to us last night that it would be a good idea to make the rest of our trip by land. We are going to rough it."

"Where are you going, sir?"

"Oh, just into the interior. Those crackers and cheese look good to me. Got any good drinking water? Yes, we are in something of a hurry. By the way, could you get us two horses? And a guide?"

The dying interest of the proprietor was fanned into a flame of enthusiasm by a gold piece from the Professor's hand. He would see to it that they got horses — very good horses — and a guide, well horsed, too; also, on hearing that they were leaving in his care the boat, the famous boat of Señor Porta, he grew intensely sympathetic. Within half an hour, horses and guide were at hand — swift horses, too — and off they started into the interior with a hamper of provisions furnished them by their host, who could not be induced to accept anything in return.

The road for twenty miles was fairly good. Then it thinned off into a bridle path. Progress became slower; at times, indeed, even it was necessary to halt while the guide with his machete cleared away the over-luxuriant vegetation.

"When do you reckon we'll reach the next village?" asked the Professor at high noon.

"If the road is clear," answered the guide, "we should reach it by about half-past four. So far we have made excellent progress."

"In that case," the Professor decided, "we might as well stop here for lunch."

"A most excellent idea, Professor," said Joe, who, by the way, had shown himself to be an excellent horseman.

"This place," observed the guide, "is a good one."

"That's what I noticed," returned the Professor. "And I observe also that it has been used by others as a halting place. Suppose we corral our horses."

They were for the moment free of "the bush." Three trees, one of them a royal palm, grouped closely together, afforded a welcome shade. Under them were a few stones so adjusted as to make a sort of fire-place.

"Let's see what we've got," continued the Professor, opening the hamper. "Bread — pretty stale — cheese, a bottle of wine, three cocoanuts and three fine pineapples. I'll toast this bread. Joe, you'll help me by gathering some firewood. You see, our guide must take care of the horses."

The Professor started a brisk fire, Joe gathered dry branches and dead leaves, while the young guide, who knew the place well, led the horses off to a spring. Returning presently, bringing a gourd filled with water, he discovered the Professor holding over the fire, on an improvised toasting fork, a slice of bread.

"I will help you," said the guide.

"Thank you, Francis; but you've done your

work, and done it well. Sit down and rest; it will be a pleasure for me to wait on you."

The guide was startled and pleased. He accepted the invitation to rest very gratefully.

"Do you, too, Joe, sit down; we've plenty of fuel."

"Professor, I, too, take much joy to wait on Francis, our guide."

"Very well, Joe, here's a stick. Just hold those pieces of cheese over the fire for a few moments."

Francis, the guide, who had never in his life refused an invitation to rest, was a pleasant-faced young man who could not have been much over twenty years of age. He was not educated according to our standard in the States, but he knew several things which our boasted civilization fails to teach. Worry was a stranger to his soul; he was never, without serious reason, in a hurry; without all the time-saving devices at our command — telephone, wireless, telegraph, trolley, steam, post-office service — he had, as the Indian said to General Sherman, "all the time there was." Francis knew how to relax. He could forget not only his own troubles but everybody else's. There are thousands and thousands of good simple men in the tropics who really know how to live much more sensibly than we hurried, excitable, nervous people of the north, where many of us do not know we are alive for the good and sufficient reason that we have no time to realize that important fact.

Therefore, Francis, throwing himself on the ground, with his face to the sky, laughed merrily,

apropos of nothing. All that he saw with those uplifted eyes of his was good. Therefore, he broke into song. Why is it that merry people show a preference for sad music? The selection of Francis on this occasion was sad in theme and in melody. It was the tale of a southern Romeo and a southern Juliet. It had many stanzas, each succeeding stanza being, when possible, more heart-rending than its predecessor. Francis sang the lugubrious words to the still more lugubrious music with much feeling and at great length. The songs of his country are not short. Why should they be? Have not the singers all the time there is to sing them?

While, therefore, Francis sadly caroled, the Professor heaped slice upon slice of toast, and Joe, with manifest pride in his art, took the slices and laid between them the toasted cheese. The Professor, who, as we know, loved smiles, was raised to the seventh heaven of enjoyment by the singing of the guide. So much did he enjoy the music, that, although the meal was ready to serve, he waited for the singer to come to an end, which he finally did after fully a quarter of an hour.

"Fine! Splendid! Francis. Is that all?"

"Oh, no, Professor, there are many, many more stanzas; but I have forgotten them — very sweet, very touching."

Joe was already biting vigorously into a sandwich.

"Professor," he inquired, "what think you of our songs? Are they not good?"

"Yes, Joe," answered the Professor as he waited upon the reclining guide who was now

smiling as happily as though he had never heard of the Romeos and Juliets of the world, "I prefer your melody much to the ragtime of our States; and as to the words, while they seem to leave nothing out, they are far nobler, more decent, more sensible and dignified than the prevailing popular songs of my own country."

Francis and Joe were so pleased with this that they ate more resolutely than ever, while the Professor waited on them with an earnestness and assiduity which is expected only of those waiters who are counting on a tip. He mixed much water with a little wine, and filled their improvised cups, the half shells of a cocoanut, frequently.

The two enjoyed their meal immensely; to such an extent, indeed, that within the time it would have required Francis to sing the remaining stanzas of his song, toast and cheese were gone.

"Oh, Professor," cried Joe, clasping his hands together, "you have eaten nothing."

"That's a fact," assented Professor Thomas. "I'm becoming more and more absent-minded every day."

"Was it absent-mindedness?" asked Francis, looking keenly at the Professor.

"Why not?"

Francis had his doubt.

"Suppose," continued the Professor, "that we push on."

"*Pronto, pronto,*" said the guide.

If the Professor had known the habits of the guide, he would have been astonished. It had been the intention of Francis to rest at this par-

ticular spot for at least two hours; to rest, and sing, and indulge in his siesta. Money could not have changed this intention. Wild horses could not have dragged him to his work. But Francis had seen into the motive of the Professor's abstinence; it was that he and Joe might enjoy a full meal. And Francis had been touched by the Professor's undertaking to wait on him. He had never worked for any man so agreeable, so accommodating. Therefore, Francis violated his sacred custom of eight years; he abandoned his siesta, his hours of rest, and set out with such good will and energy that, notwithstanding many blockades, he brought his party of two into a tiny village by five o'clock of the afternoon.

The village consisted of eleven thatch-covered huts and a general store. Eleven families made up the population, and each family boasted a goodly number of children.

The Professor, ably seconded by the guide, picked out the least populous family, and begged for supper, a lodging for the night, and breakfast on the following morning. The woman of the house was not overcrowded with work; she had to care for only seven children, ranging in age from two to fourteen years. Also, she needed the money. So she was very gracious, and assisted by her eldest daughter proceeded at once to prepare a supper the principal dish of which was to be tortillas. Furthermore, inspired by the lively gratitude of the Professor, who won the hearts of the boys and girls by gifts of candy

which he had bought at the local store, she sent her eldest boy scouring the village in search of hammocks, one for the Professor, one for the boy, and one for the guide.

The supper was, judged by the appetites of the three travelers, an undoubted success. After it, there were fun and chatter and games, inspired by the Professor and filling the hearts of the little South Americans with joy and laughter. There were songs, too. Francis regaled the company with another sad and lengthy ballad.

Then the children lifted their voices. They sang nothing but hymns, most of them in honor of the Mother of God.

About this time, the younger members were beginning to rub their eyes.

"Look," said the Professor to the mother, "I fear we are keeping your little ones beyond their time. Joe, too, is sleepy. He's been traveling all day, poor little fellow. Isn't it time for them to go to bed?"

"We are all tired and happy," returned the smiling matron. "Children," she continued, "it's time for prayers."

Down they fell, at the word, father, mother, sons and daughters upon their knees. The father of the family led the prayer, reciting the Our Father, the angelical salutation, the acts of Faith, Hope, Love and Contrition, the Memorare, and ending with the sign of the Cross.

"Good night, children. Go to bed."

"Good night, father; good night, mother," they cried in chorus, whereupon father and mother

and children without moving from where they were kneeling laid themselves flat on the floor. They were all in bed.

"Joe," whispered the Professor, "this is all so unusual. What do we do?"

"Look at Francis, Professor. We do the same as he does."

Francis had taken off his coat and shoes and climbed into his hammock.

"Good night, Joe, sleep tight."

"Good night, Professor."

"Oh," he suddenly exclaimed, clapping his hand to his head, "I forgot!"

"Forgot what?"

"Your quinine. I gave you none since yesterday noon, and I forgot to bring any with me."

"I care not," said Joe as the Professor raised him up and laid him in the hammock.

The Professor shortly followed. He was edified and amused. Only a few moments had passed since the order for bed was issued; and now, judging by their measured breathings and fixed positions, the whole family was fast asleep. He, too, very quickly followed their example.

At early dawn next morning, he was aroused by the clapping of two hands. He opened his eyes, and, looking, discovered that the author of those hand-claps was the woman of the house.

"Time to get up," she announced. At once, the father and the seven children raised their heads, rubbed their eyes, and arose.

They were up and ready for the day.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PROFESSOR IS FORCED TO CONCEAL JOE FROM ENEMIES ON EVERY HAND

WELL provisioned and with fresh horses, the party set out in good humor that morning, following the fond farewells of their hosts and the joyous acclamations of the entire juvenile populace, most of whom liked Joe, all of whom were by way of adoring the Professor.

Their progress, rapid and uneventful, was marred by two things; the Professor failed to procure quinine. The storekeeper was out of it; he was going to send for some "to-morrow." The Professor did not know that the good man had been telling the same story to his customers for over three weeks. Worst of all, Joe, before noontime, began to show signs of fatigue. For the first time since leaving New Orleans, his appetite failed him.

The Professor became concerned.

"Francis," he said, "I'm worried about Joe. In Belize, the boy was badly bitten by mosquitoes; and I fear that he's going to have a serious attack of malaria. It is now one o'clock. Do you know of any place nearer than the next village where we can stop?"

Francis considered for a few moments.

"Oh!" he exclaimed, "I have it. Seven miles

to the west of us, there is a friend of mine, who has a fine house. He lives alone. Joe will have a bed there. But it is just seven miles out of our way. Our next regular stop we will make, if we go on, by seven o'clock to-night. In the morning, if we start even so late as nine we shall reach the capital of Escadilla by three in the afternoon."

The Professor meditated.

"Francis, I hardly know what to do. I fear to go on on account of the boy, who is not fit for traveling. On the other hand, delay may be dangerous. You know our story as I have already explained it to you; and by this time Pasquale and his crowd must be on our tracks. They will leave nothing undone to capture Joe before he reaches the borders of Escadilla. The delay of a single day may spoil everything. Hey, Joe, we're going to say three Hail Marys for light. Let us all pray.

"Francis," he said after all had made their prayer, "we shall go to the house of your friend."

In good time, they arrived; and were welcomed cordially by the owner of the place, Señor Otero.

While a servant conducted the Professor and his charge inside, their host held a short conversation with Francis, who told him what he knew of the adventures of Joe and Professor Thomas. Señor Otero was more than interested.

"Come aside," he said to Francis. "You say you prayed for guidance as to going on or turning aside for my place?"

"I told you, Señor, that we each of us said three Hail Marys."

"I'm going to pray more after this," whispered Otero. "That was a real answer to prayer. Had you three gone on, you would all be captured before nightfall."

"What," cried Francis.

"Sh! Not so loud. I got word only a while ago that there are seven men or more guarding the road and on the lookout for a young man, aged about twenty-four, dark of complexion, quick, American, alert, pleasant; and with him a boy of ten. They have orders to capture the boy alive; it doesn't make any special difference what they do with the young man."

"Ai, ai!" exclaimed Francis. "This is most serious. Even supposing we should be able to start off to-morrow, it would be only to walk into a trap."

"Say," cried the Professor, stepping out on the veranda, "there's no quinine in this house."

"I am sorry, Professor," said Otero, "and I blame myself. I have been intending for many days to get it, saying each day 'I will get it to-morrow.' There should always be quinine in the house."

"But Joe needs it right away."

"It shall be attended to, Professor. I myself will get him quinine to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" echoed the Professor.

Señor Otero laughed.

"It is always to-morrow with us."

"Isn't there any place near by where one can get some?"

"You see that path over there?"

"Yes, yes."

"Well, by following it two miles, you will arrive at the house of my friend Señor Chavez. He has abundance of quinine. I would go gladly myself; but I am somewhat lame, and it is almost impossible to get a horse to make it, as the path is in many places too narrow. You can't miss the way."

"Excuse me," said the Professor, throwing off his coat, and dashing for the path.

"Look!" cried Francis. "Is he not wonderful?"

"He is running," commented Otero. "What an impetuous young man! He won't run far though."

Francis held a different opinion; but he did not think it worth while stating.

"Señor," he said, "what would you advise me to do?"

"Come in, let us eat and drink, Francis; and while we do this, we shall consider carefully."

And the two entered and ate and drank and considered carefully for more than half an hour. When they issued from the house, Francis, in a fever of impatience, mounted Otero's best horse, and, at a gallop, started down the road whence he and his two friends had come less than an hour before. Francis took no rest, nor halted that night. Señor Otero was still standing on the veranda watching the flight of Francis, when the Professor, streaming with perspiration, breathing heavily, and still running, emerged from the trees.

"Hurrah!" he gasped. "I've got it."

"What's your hurry?" asked the puzzled Otero.

"Why," answered the runner between gasps, "I want, if possible, to head off the fever from Joe."

Otero, very much astonished, was about to give expression to his sentiments, but before he could find the fitting word, the Professor had vanished into the house.

And all that night, he sat by the boy's side, sat and watched and nursed, and prayed.

In the morning, Joe was clearly better, but no less clearly too weak to travel. They must perforce remain with Otero for another night.

The Professor was much concerned about the disappearance of Francis.

"You need not worry," said Otero, "he was called away on other important work. He told me to say that you should not travel to-day in any event."

"Why not?"

"Professor, now that the night is over, and that Joe is not within hearing, I feel free to let you know that your three Hail Marys worked."

"Worked?"

"Yes; had you gone on, Joe would have been captured, you yourself would have been injured or killed. Pasquale has got his men guarding the roads."

"But we had eight hours start on him."

"Yes, but he had the telegraph, and he has accomplices all around."

"Prayer has done this," said the Professor.

"Why can't it do more? It surely will. But how about our good friend Francis?"

"He went last night to see whether there were any way of clearing your road, or, failing that, whether he can find out some unguarded path. Wait till he returns."

The day passed slowly. Constant in his ministration, the Professor was filled with joy at eventide when Joe asked for food and proclaimed himself recovered.

"Oh, but to-morrow will be glorious," cried the boy. "We shall start at dawn."

"I hope so!" said the Professor fervently.

The next dawn, when it came, was anything but the joyful thing to which Joe had looked.

CHAPTER XVIII

PASQUALE ONCE MORE. THE PROFESSOR AND HIS WARD ARE HEMMED IN

THE vigil of the night before, the trip of four miles accomplished at a run, and the comforting knowledge that Joe, thanks to prompt attention and the administration of the quinine, was on the way to recovery, all contributed to send the Professor early that evening into the soundest of slumbers.

It seemed to him that he had only laid his head comfortably on the pillow, when he was brought rudely to consciousness by a pair of strong hands shaking him vigorously.

"Halloa! what is it?" he asked, opening his eyes.

"It is I, Francis. Professor, you have not a moment to lose. Pasquale and some of his followers have at length succeeded in tracking you. They're on their way now. They should be here in fifteen minutes."

The Professor as he slipped, fireman like, into his clothes, said:

"Are you there, Señor Otero? Ah, yes. I see you. Would you mind getting Joe up and dressed? Francis, you're wonderful. If you were my own brother, you couldn't have been

more devoted. Hurry up there, Joe, we're off."

"But what are you going to do?" asked Otero. "You're not safe outside this house."

"Neither are we safe in it. Joe and I are going to hide."

"But where?" cried both men.

"I'll not tell," answered the Professor. "Here's the point: if you don't know where we are, you will be able to answer that we slipped out of the house without giving any information as to where we were going. If either of you want us, all you have to do is walk down that path I traveled for the quinine till you reach a fallen tree blocking the pathway."

"I know the spot well," said Otero. "It is almost three quarters of a mile from here. Good."

"And, when you get there, sing one of your plaintive Spanish songs, only don't sing the whole thing — one or two lines will be enough, and we will be at your service at once. Good-by, thank you a million times," saying which, he caught Joe in his arms and sped out of the house.

The moon was shining brightly in the heavens affording the Professor sufficient light for his purpose.

"Joe," he said, as he reached the path, "Pasquale is on our trail once more. He knows we are here; and he's coming hot-foot after us. But don't worry. Coming back with your quinine, I stopped just once to get my breath, and by the merest accident I discovered at the stopping place a really fine cave. It is fifty feet away

from the path, and hidden by the brush unless you happen to look in its direction from a certain angle. I didn't have time to explore it carefully, but I took a peep in, and I'm satisfied that it will serve our purpose."

"There may be snakes there or wild animals," said the boy.

"Therefore," said the Professor, "let us say together once more the Litany of our Lady."

So as the man pressed on lightly making nothing of the weight of the boy nestled in his arms, they recited with perfect confidence and extraordinary fervor a prayer which has the power of banishing fear and kindling hope.

"Sh!" whispered the Professor, as they reached the invocation, "'Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,'" to which Joe answered, "'Have mercy on us, O Lord.'"

The Professor paused.

The sound of hoof-beats, faint and distant, fell upon their ears.

"They're near the house — Pasquale's men," whispered the Professor. "Never mind, we'll be hidden safe before they're through talking with Otero." And breaking into a run he paused not until the fallen tree was reached.

"Now, Joe," he continued, setting the boy upon his feet, "follow after me."

Making his way through an opening in the bush, he picked his steps slowly through a thick and apparently impenetrable growth, until he stood before an opening of five feet square in a hillside.

"Here, Joe," he said, stooping low, "get on my

back and put your arms around my neck, and hold on tight. Dig your feet into me so that you can't slip. That's the idea. Now my arms and legs are just as free as though you weren't around. If there are any wild animals in there, we're going to find it out at once."

The Professor before entering took out his flashlight, and threw it here and there until he discovered a thick branch four feet in length.

"That's really as good as a baseball bat," he commented. "And now for the animals."

Advancing cautiously to the entrance of the cave, he flashed his light over the interior.

The cave within was over seven feet in height, running back to a distance of at least eight yards. The sides were irregular. Toward the further end, they receded so that the contour of that part could not be seen. The floor, though rough, was sufficiently regular.

The Professor gazed intently. Then —

"In the name of God," he said and sallied bravely in. Taking the middle of the cave furthest removed from nooks and crannies, he paused once more and flashed the light into every part.

"Thank God," he said, presently restoring the boy to his feet. "It's extraordinary, it's unbelievable but if this cave is the home of any serpent or wild beast, it has been vacated this night for you and me."

"Professor," said Joe, love and admiration shining in his eyes, "I'm not one bit afraid. I used to be a coward, but you have changed me."

"Joe," said the Professor, acknowledging the compliment with a genial smile, "do you know what time it is?"

Joe took out his watch.

"Half-past two o'clock, Professor."

"Ah! the dawn will soon break. We must have been awakened before two. Now, I went to bed at seven last evening, and so have had nearly seven hours of sleep — almost enough for any man of my age. But you, Joe, have been ill, and you need rest. Here," he went on, taking off his coat and spreading it on the floor, "lie down and rest. I will watch."

"No, I will watch with you."

"Obey your doctor, Joe."

"As Duffy said," returned the youth, "I hear and I obey."

In a minute the child was asleep.

Then the Professor seated himself beside the lad, and took out his beads. His fingers went over two decades. Then the beads slipped from his grasp, falling into the open right hand of Joe. Sitting with bowed head, the Professor was slumbering too. Dawn came and broad daylight, and still they slept.

Just about the time when Joe threw himself upon the Professor's coat, eight horsemen, led by Pasquale, came clattering up to Otero's home. Pasquale, dismounting, ran to the door and knocked sharply. There was no answer. He struck the door with his fists. No answer. He kicked the panels.

At length, a window on the second floor was opened.

"Hey there," roared Pasquale. "Is there a young man with a small boy in your house?"

"What do you mean by spoiling my sleep at this hour of the night," cried the proprietor of the house with much indignation. He was attired in a simple white night shirt.

"Do you hear me?" roared the exasperated Pasquale. "Is there a —"

"Stay, I will dress myself and come down at once." Saying which, the speaker closed the window, leaving Pasquale to express his emotions in a string of profanity and objurgation. He had full fifteen minutes to express himself, while his following surrounded the house and Señor Otero arrayed himself with unusual deliberation.

"Well," he said, opening his door, "what is the meaning of all this?"

"Is there a young man here with a small boy?"

"No; there is a young man here, but there is no small boy."

"This way, men," said Pasquale to the two horsemen stationed at the door, "get that young man at once. In what room is he?"

"Upstairs," said Otero, "I gave him a certain room, but I suspect he is now in hiding."

"Here, men," ordered Pasquale to the two horsemen at the right, "go on and help search the house. I fancy when I get hold of that young upstart, there'll be little trouble in finding the whereabouts of the boy."

Otero protested violently while the followers of Pasquale threw doors open, moved beds, and flung the furniture about with reckless hands.

Suddenly there was a shout of triumph.

"Here he is; we've got him," and down the stairs two of the conspirators led Francis.

"Why," exclaimed Pasquale, turning in a rage upon Otero, "that is not the man at all."

"Oh, isn't it?" said Otero. "You asked whether there was a young man in the house, and I told you there was. He is evidently a young man, and you are most unreasonable."

"Who are you, fellow?" asked Pasquale.

"I am Francis."

"What are you doing here?"

"Visiting my friend, Señor Otero."

"But why did you hide?"

"I feared, sir, you might take vengeance on me."

"But what have I to do with you?"

"You see, sir, I was their guide."

"Whose guide?"

"The guide of the young man and the little boy."

"Where are they? Speak quick or I'll kill you."

"Alas, Señor, I am much distressed; but I know not what has become of them."

"But did you not conduct them to this house?"

"Yes, Señor, I did. It was yesterday. It was in the afternoon. It was, I think, about two of the clock. Maybe, it was a little later. Not much later, you know. Perhaps not more than —"

"Go on," roared Pasquale, hardly able to contain himself. "You brought them here yesterday. Did you stay with them?"

"No, Señor, I did not. I left them with my friend Señor Otero, and returned to visit some acquaintances of mine."

"And when did you come back?"

"This night. I return some hours ago. They are not here. They have disappeared."

"Is this true, Otero?"

"It is; the young man tells me that he has a sudden idea and that he will go. So, he departs."

"When did he leave?"

"Some hours ago. I know not the time."

"And where did they start for?"

"I do not know where they went. The young man said that he was on his way to Escadilla. Naturally, he would go that way. But he did not tell me."

Pasquale detailed three of his following to return to the main road, and scour it for signs of the fugitives. Then, he called for food and drink.

At the table set for them, Pasquale and his men ate and drank and discussed. It was resolved that at dawn each should be assigned a point of the compass, and should explore the neighborhood within a radius of one mile.

Pasquale himself would remain at the house of Otero in the hope that the two fugitives might return.

CHAPTER XIX

INTRODUCING A POWERFUL ENEMY, A POWERFUL FRIEND, AND A FAMOUS SONG

SUDDENLY the Professor raised his head. He rubbed his eyes and gazed toward the mouth of the cave. It was broad day; he had been asleep for several hours and something unusual had awakened him. He felt sure that he would have gone on slumbering much longer had there not been some noise or disturbance alien to the songs of birds and other sounds natural to the time and place. Arising and standing tense, he strained eyes and ears. Ah! there it was. The crackling of twigs and the swish of branches gave warning that some one was approaching.

He touched Joe lightly. The boy opened his eyes.

"Sh!" warned the Professor, putting a finger to his lips. "Make no sound, Joe; but go back to the farthest end of the cave. There is some one coming."

Joe obeyed, while the Professor stood erect, still listening. There could be no doubt. The noises were becoming more distinct. Some one was on his way to the cave. He fancied that he could even distinguish a footfall.

The Professor tiptoed up to the mouth of the

cave. On one side of the opening was a recess. Standing in this, the Professor waited.

Nearer and nearer came the unknown person. It could hardly, the Professor reflected, be a friend. Were it Otero or Francis, a snatch of song would have heralded their arrival. In fact, as they did not know anything of the cave, it was highly improbable that they would trouble to look for his hiding-place; the arranged musical signal would be so much easier. Again, there was nothing in the cave to show that any human being made use of it. It was to be inferred then that the unknown person now cautiously approaching was one of a search party. Again, was he alone? Others might be near him. Perhaps there were two coming. He listened carefully. No; there was only one making his way to the cave. The Professor made the sign of the cross, and took a crouching position.

A few seconds passed — they seemed like an hour to the watcher — then came the sound of labored breathing. A few more seconds passed. The noise of movement outside had ceased; to his ear there came nothing but a man's heavy breathing. Evidently, the person outside was pausing, perhaps to get his breath, more probably to debate on the feasibility of entering.

Then there came a movement and with it a slight but perceptible darkening of the cave's entrance. The man outside was standing in front of the opening. There came another pause which, few seconds though it was, seemed to the Professor interminable. The cave began to grow darker. The intruder was advancing. One step,

another, a third, and there appeared a head. Another step, and there stood out almost in silhouette the figure of a man. Only for a moment stood that figure, for with a flying leap into which he threw all his force and vigor, the Professor alighted on the man's shoulders, bringing him with the tremendous force of the impact prone to the ground. The man's face was buried in sand; he struggled violently as the Professor, straddling him, held his head to the earth.

"Quick, Joe," he hissed slowly, clearly, "go and pull my handkerchief out of my coat, and bring it to me."

Joe obeyed with alacrity. He showed neither nervousness nor fear.

"We must gag him," said the Professor, "or he may give the alarm."

"Who is it, Professor?"

"Sit on his legs, Joe, and take away his gun. Is it loaded? It is? Fine. Look for a knife, too. Now, sir," he continued, addressing himself to the back of the man's head, "we're going to gag you. Cock that pistol, Joe. Very good. Hold it steady. Thank you, Joe. That's right."

The Professor thereupon rose.

"Now, sir, suppose you stand up, and remember there's a pistol pointed at you to remind you not to make any outcry."

Slowly, as though stunned, the man rose on his elbows and revealed to his captors the face of Pasquale.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" said the Professor. "A man of your calibre ought to be ashamed of himself to spend his time persecuting a mere child.

Now tell us — and mind you don't speak loud — hold that pistol steady, Joe — how you came to find this cave."

"The others," answered Pasquale, directing his voice to the Professor and his eyes to the pistol, "I sent on a scouring expedition. I remained at Otero's house. I grew lonesome and finding a path followed it. When I came this far, I saw something white off the path. I went to it; it was a handkerchief."

"You will have that monogramed corner of your handkerchief sticking out of your pocket, Joe. It looks nice; but there's vanity in it. Now look you, Pasquale, you are our prisoner; we can't afford to let you go. And I don't fancy standing guard over any human being with a pistol. Therefore, we must tie you up. But I don't like the idea of gagging you. After all, I feel that you were a gentleman — once! Now, give me your word of honor that you'll make no cry for help or anything of the sort, and I'll not gag you."

"Thank you, Professor. I give you my word of honor."

The captors with as little roughness as possible bound Pasquale hand and foot; having accomplished which the Professor brushed the prisoner carefully and removed from his face the sand and the dirt. Watching him, one would think that he and Pasquale were friends and brothers.

"You are very kind," said Pasquale. The wretched fellow seemed to be sincere.

"I'm sorry," said the Professor, "for the awful jolt I gave you as you entered, Señor Pas-

quale. But it was self-defence. I knew that if you got out, it would mean the capture of my friend Joe."

"Yes, and violence, perhaps death for you, Professor," put in Joe.

"I wasn't thinking of that, Joe. But I suppose you are right."

"It was a matter of statesmanship," pleaded the captive. "It was, in a manner, war."

"Peanut statesmanship," commented the Professor, "and a peanut rebellion. Joe, give me that pistol; you are flourishing it too much. Now, Señor Pasquale, you've got us into this mess. Would you be kind enough to tell us how we can get out of it?"

Pasquale shrugged his shoulders.

"I am sorry I engaged in this," he said, "but having gone this far, I must stick to it. Eventually, you must leave this cave. You cannot go to Escadilla or return to the coast."

"Beast!" snarled Joe.

"None of that, Joe; never hit a man when he's down. As for you, Señor Pasquale, at any rate you are honest in your knavery. But somehow, I fancy, there must be a way out. You're a Catholic, aren't you?"

"I was baptised and brought up in that faith."

"Yes, but I imagine that you are sadly out of practice. What you need is a general confession. By the way, I fear I've hurt your head. If it were safe, I'd venture out and get some water and bathe it. Perhaps, I could —"

The Professor suddenly ceased speaking, and turned in listening attitude toward the mouth of

the cave. There was no need for him to strain his hearing this time. High and clear and sweet and jubilant came the melodious words:

> "After the boil is over
> After the break of morn
> After the dancers are leaving
> After the stars are gone —
> After the boil."

"Whoopee!" cried the Professor, becoming a boy again, leaping into the air and clicking his feet thrice before he came to the ground. "It's Francis, and his voice tells me that we are out of the woods. Excuse us, Señor Pasquale, there *is* a way out. Come on, Joe, God bless you, come on."

And indeed it was a joyful coming out. The two, unmindful of bush and of brier, tore their way toward the fallen tree, the Professor in the lead. Through a slight opening, he presently perceived a group of men. A moment later, he descried Francis and Otero, wreathed in smiles; beside them a tall, dignified gentleman and two others dressed as army officers.

"Look, Joe," he said a few moments later, "are those others friends of yours?"

Joe looked, gave a loud cry, and running forward, "Father, father," he cried.

The tall gentleman rushed forward, stooped down, and received into his arms the little fellow, who, now that the awful strain was over, burst into tears and sobs, his face pillowed on his father's shoulder.

CHAPTER XX

IN WHICH THE PROFESSOR ASTOUNDS PASQUALE

THE Professor meanwhile was receiving hearty greetings from Francis and Otero.

"The conspiracy is smashed," said Otero. "You are now absolutely safe."

"I wish I could believe that," said the Professor. "My! but I'm happy! When I stumbled upon little Joe in New Orleans only a couple of weeks ago and lightly undertook to see him home, I never dreamed of what a big contract I was making. Why, just one moment ago, I saw no possible way out. Shake again, Francis; shake again, Señor Otero. Danger and trouble ripen friendships mighty fast. But how did it all happen?"

"Well, Professor," said Francis, who looked and spoke as though he had just come into a fortune, "I had no trouble at all in reaching Escadilla."

"What!" gasped the Professor.

"He traveled all night," explained Otero, pounding Francis on the back in his enthusiasm. "He had three relays of horses, and the last one died under him when he reached the Capital."

"But — but — how — why I knew nothing about all this."

"It was Señor Otero's idea," explained Fran-

cis. "While you were getting the quinine, Otero suggested it. He saw that unless we got the boy's father to send out a relief expedition, there was no possible chance for you or the boy."

"But when you returned, Francis, you told me nothing about going for help."

"Let me explain, Professor," put in Señor Otero. "In sending Francis off, I felt almost sure he would not make it. In case of failure, he would either return or be captured. I thought it best to say nothing, and to keep on thinking out some other plan, if he failed. But he did not fail; it was the most wonderful ride in the history of this country. He made such progress that night that when morning came, he was within a few miles of Escadilla and had passed all of Pasquale's crowd. He reached Escadilla before noon, saw the President, got him to make ready a relief force at once, took three hours' sleep, and then started back to tell you that relief would be on hand in a day or two."

"Good gracious!" cried the Professor. "But why didn't he tell me when he got back?"

"Ah, he was much too excited, Professor. I, too, was much too excited. You must understand that within twelve miles of my home, he discovered a party of men on horseback and at full gallop in front of him. Pasquale, he recognized, was with them. Francis is a very clever boy. He watch and he listen, and he learns that they know where you and the boy are hidden. They are bound for my house. And then, Francis —"

"I make a detour," said the joyous youth.

"And that," explained Otero, "was a brave and a bold thing. He had no road. He forded a river and picked his way through the bush, and he succeeded. Oh, Francis!"

Here, Otero, a brave man himself and knowing therefore how to appreciate bravery, threw his arms about Francis and implanted two hearty kisses upon the blushing youth's cheeks.

"And when I arrived," said Francis, beaming at the Professor, "I know not how close Pasquale and his men might be All I wanted was to have you hide. So I did not think to tell you that help might be expected within twelve, fifteen, twenty-four hours."

"And you did not get off a minute too soon," supplemented Otero. "You were hardly gone when they arrived. And Francis and I told them nothing but the truth. But we did not tell all the truth."

Here Francis and Otero smiled and winked and poked each other in the ribs, and clapped each other on the back in vast amusement.

"My!" exclaimed the Professor, "God has given us wonderful friends."

"No," contradicted Otero; "it is the other way. God has given Francis and me a wonderful friend. Francis would rather work for you than loaf for anybody else."

"It is true, Professor; and Señor Otero loves you, too."

"Just a little while ago," resumed Otero, "the President arrived with his cavalry."

"Cavalry!"

"Yes; the rest of the army is also on the way.

They came with a dash and they have already captured all the conspirators, except two whom they shot, and Pasquale whom they have not been able to find."

"And what will they do with Pasquale when they get him?"

"They will stand him up blindfolded and shoot him."

"Oh," said the Professor, his smile leaving him; and as his late friends went on to give him fuller details, he was, in spite of himself, strangely inattentive.

Meanwhile Joe, large eyed, eloquent, poured into the ears of his father and the two leading soldiers of Escadilla the story of the past fortnight. The little boy had forgotten himself. He was making a panegyric of the Professor. Many details did the boy omit, but nothing did he overlook concerning the tutor who had fasted, who had kept vigil, who had risked life and limb that he, the son of the President of Escadilla, might be brought safe home.

As Joe spoke, his father, now and then, stole a glance at the Professor. He saw a smiling young man, cheerful, gay, roguish-eyed, yet haggard, travel stained, within a little of complete collapse. The President looked and loved him.

Joe had reached that stage of his adventures in which they made entrance into the cave. At this point, the Professor broke away from Francis and Otero and stepped over toward the other party.

"Ah!" said Joe, who had been watching and waiting for this opportunity. "Father, let me

introduce to you the most wonderful — the most — father, this is Professor Thomas."

And the tall, dignified, stately President of Escadilla stepped forward, holding out two hands of welcome, and, with a face alive with gratitude, caught the Professor's extended hand in both of his and said:

"Professor Thomas, a thousand, a million welcomes. My heart is too full of gratitude for expression." His fine eyes as he spoke filled with tears.

Joe came to his aid.

"Oh, Professor, make yourself acquainted with my father's good friends, General Chavez and Colonel Ballistero."

The Professor was moved and surprised. The men before him, perfect gentlemen in speech and bearing, overwhelmed him with their genuine and spontaneous expressions of gratitude.

"Gentlemen," he said as soon as he could find a proper opening, "will you excuse me for a moment? I would speak to Joe."

The faithful pair retired a few paces; whereupon the Professor whispered at some length and with uncommon earnestness. Joe at first frowned and shook his head. Very soon, however, his nose lost its wrinkles, the frown was displaced by a smile, and the little leader nodded as cheerfully as daffodils in a vernal breeze. The conference ended in a warm handshake and the departure of the Professor.

"My friend has gone to the cave where he left something," explained the boy.

The Professor found Pasquale seated where the

sunshine could reach him, his head bowed, supreme misery on his features.

"Señor Pasquale," he said, "pardon my long absence. Much has happened in the last hour or two. The President of Escadilla has come with his cavalry to our rescue, two of your men have been shot, the others captured."

"They will shoot me," said Pasquale. "It is the fortune of war. You were right, Professor; I want a priest. Let me say this, I have hated you. But now I know you are a very decent man."

"Señor Pasquale, you are a prisoner."

"Yes; the game is up."

"But not the prisoner of Escadilla. You are my prisoner."

Pasquale looked up wonderingly.

"And it would spoil the memory of two most amazing weeks if I had your blood on my hands."

Pasquale was astonished.

"To get down to brass tacks," the Professor went on, as he cut the cords that bound the man's hands and feet, raised him erect, dusted his garments and chafed his swollen wrists and ankles, "you are free. In freeing you, I wish you to know that I am doing it with the full knowledge and hearty approbation of that dear little boy you hounded. He tells me to say that he bears you no malice."

"And do you forgive me, too?" asked Pasquale, his face quivering with emotion.

"Who? Me? Oh, that goes without saying. Now, Señor, you are free. It is for you to es-

cape, and I heartily hope you will. May I ask you a few favors?"

"Ask — ask — anything."

"Promise me to leave this country as soon as possible, and to abandon all designs on Escadilla."

The man with a great wonder on his face raised his right hand.

"Before God, I promise to leave this country and to abandon all designs on Escadilla."

"Do you need money?"

Pasquale looked into the kind, sympathetic face and clasping his hands exclaimed:

"Oh, my God! my God! No, Professor, I need nothing but your prayers. I have been an adventurer. I see it now. You are right. I will make a general confession. But why have you acted so to me? Who are you?"

The Professor took out his card and presented it to Pasquale. He read it. He read it again. His face grew deathly pale.

"Oh! Oh!" he gasped. "I cannot speak now. You shall hear from me."

The Professor, very much startled, took his hand.

"We part friends, do we not?"

"Friends! That is not the word. You have brought an earthquake into my life. I will start again on other lines."

"Good-by, Señor Pasquale."

The man shook his hand, tried to speak, and failing, bowed and went out into the brush.

"Now what," mused the Professor, "is the new mystery! I never saw such wonder and aston-

ishment. It was something more than my giving him his freedom which showed itself on his face. As he said himself, there was really a sort of earthquake that convulsed him. And what did he mean by saying he would start life again on other lines?"

CHAPTER XXI

THE REPUBLIC OF ESCADILLA, AND MORE ABOUT PASQUALE

FRANCIS was treated for all the world like a hero of the "Arabian Nights." The President of Escadilla fitted him out with an excellently caparisoned steed and clothed his sturdy young body in costly raiment. Otero would accept nothing. He was rich. As for the Professor, common decency required that he should receive a new outfit.

Within three hours after the joyous reunion recorded in the preceding chapter, three hours of breakfasting, speech making and many cheerful toasts, a chariot, pale green, with the presidential arms and drawn by four splendid horses drove up to Otero's door. Into it proceeded the Professor, Joe, freshly bathed and clad in immaculate white, and the President of the Republic of Escadilla. Four guards of honor, the two high officers, Francis and Otero, rode beside it. Twenty mounted cavalrymen preceded and the rest of the cavalry, eighteen in number, brought up the rear. The cavalrymen, though rather small in stature, were bright young fellows, and arrayed in the colors of the lily and the rose. Reaching the main road, there was a halt, while the rest of the army, thirty-six privates and six-

teen officers, drawn up to receive the cavalcade, saluted with much ceremony.

It was a long drive but a pleasant one. Joe "fought his battles o'er." He told his story, then went back again and again always to make sure that he had left nothing unsaid that redounded to the glory of his hero.

"Look here, Joe," said the Professor, when Joe had held the attention of all for at least two hours, "your father will think I have paid you to sing my praises. Mr. President," he went on, "I could say some very beautiful things about your boy; but I won't. He's conceited enough. All the same, if he keeps on at his present stride, he will grow up to be a real man. However, it's time to change the subject. How is Pasquale?"

"You mean, Professor, the ringleader of the conspiracy to capture my son?"

"Precisely."

"His right name is Virgil Oporto. He was the President of Escadilla before me. Although we have an election every four years, he got it into his head that he would hold the position for life. He was defeated by me over seven years ago and at once tried to start a revolution. I succeeded in putting it down and banished him and his lieutenants. For the last year, in fact since my election, he's been trying to start another revolution. He wasn't making much headway. Then he conceived the brilliant idea of capturing my boy. Now I want to be fair to the man; up to the time of his defeat, he was a cultured gentleman, honest, upright, and a writer of several books. But ambition changed him."

"'By that sin fell the angels,'" said the Professor, rendering of course, Shakespeare's words in the Spanish tongue. "But tell me about your Republic of Escadilla. Pardon me for saying it, but I never heard of it till Joe told me, and, for the matter of that, everybody who would listen to him, that he was the son of the President of Escadilla."

The President laughed.

"'Thereby hangs a tale,' Professor — you see, I too have read Shakespeare. Escadilla is a beautiful valley about twenty-eight miles square and it is forty miles away on every side from anywhere. The republics and governments in its vicinity are too busy with their own troubles to bother about it; but some day one or the other will gobble it up. As a Republic, it is only eighteen years old. Some gentlemen, enjoying an outing, following as you Americans say, 'The call of the wild,' happened upon this valley. They found excellent water, good drainage, a fine soil, and several of them conceived the idea of colonizing it. It was an easy thing to get other gentlemen interested. As a result, we have a capital of five thousand inhabitants. Two thousand or more are engaged in agricultural work and mining. Your friend Oporto — or Pasquale — did much to put everything on a fine basis."

"I think, Joe," said the Professor, "you might now tell your father of what happened in the cave just before Francis raised our souls to ecstasy with the words 'after the boil is over.'"

Nothing loath, Joe grew eloquent once more.

If he failed to persuade his father that the Professor was not a young Hercules, it was certainly no fault of his.

"Professor," said the President, "if I had been consulted, he would never have gone free. It would have been my duty to put him to death."

"That's what I thought, Mr. President," observed the Professor affably.

"And that is what I thought, too," added Joe.

"But I'm very glad now that you did not consult me. I should have acted like a politician; you acted like the highest type of man, a Christian. May your sublime act of mercy bless the giver and the receiver."

"Say, Professor, is not my father a very great man?"

"How I wish you were right, my boy. But to return to Pasquale. You say he vowed to leave the country and to give up all plotting against Escadilla.?"

"He certainly did, Mr. President. And he added, whatever he meant, that I had brought an earthquake into his life and that he would start again on other lines."

"If he gave his solemn word," said the President, "he will keep it. Yes, you have done the best thing. You are a man of God. How can I reward you? What can I do?"

"I'll tell you what, Mr. President, I'm all in. Joe and I are worn out."

"Yes," assented Joe, "we are worn out."

"How thoughtless of me," said the President. "You would both rest?"

"Yes, father; we need it badly," cried Joe who,

previously to the Professor's declaration, had not given the question a moment's thought.

"Well, pardon me. We'll arrange this place like a Pullman car. As for myself, I'll go out with the driver, and very soon, a few miles further, get a horse, one of my own. And if you dream, may angels inspire your imaginations."

With curtains drawn, the carriage, now on a spacious road built by the Republic of Escadilla, went its way smoothly, swiftly, while within, the boy and his hero, utterly worn out, slept, notwithstanding the kind suggestion of the President, a dreamless sleep. Afternoon slipped into twilight, twilight into night, and still they slumbered.

Suddenly the Professor rose, rubbed his eyes, and listened.

"Oh, Joe," he exclaimed, "if we're not in heaven, we're near it. Listen, Joe — stand up, you rascal, while you listen. Oh, but it sounds good to me, Joe, there's a band outside, a brass band, a wonderful brass band, a heavenly brass band, and they're playing the 'Star Bangful Spanner'!"

The Professor was right. It was a wonderful brass band, twenty-four pieces in all, and every player a soloist.

"Oh, Professor," said the boy, "it is in your honor. My father is a great man. He knows you love your country."

"It's like a letter from home," said the Professor, throwing up the blinds. "My! Joe, this is wonderful. Where are we? Come here," he added as he lowered the window.

The carriage had halted in a grand circle, brilliantly lighted with electricity. Around this circle rose houses of all sizes and shapes, each one a thing of taste and beauty. The circle itself was thronged with people, who, as the Professor and Joe put their heads out of the carriage window, broke into spontaneous cheers of welcome. Girls and boys, innocent-eyed, radiant, each clothed like Joe in immaculate white, waved Chinese lanterns.

"My boy! My boy!" cried a distinguished woman, breaking away from the crowd, and Joe with a leap was in his mother's arms. Then came his three sisters, beautiful refined children and his two younger brothers. And if there were tears and sobs, it only goes to show how God can turn sorrow into joy.

The Professor was introduced to all the family, who on the spot became his friends for life.

Best of all, from the Professor's viewpoint, Joe presented his boy friends, at least twenty-four in number; and the hero of the day became a boy again — it was so easy for him — and captured their hearts, and engaged them all for the next morning to play a game of baseball and to indulge in other American sports.

In the President's home, a banquet was awaiting them to which the two did full justice, while the band on the veranda without rendered a concert in a manner almost unknown to American ears.

At midnight, the Professor was conducted by the President himself to a splendidly appointed bedroom.

"The house," said its master, "is yours and everything in it. Professor, my little boy adores you. He imitates you. He was a petulant, spoiled child when he left us. Now he is manly and modest — at least, by comparison — and unselfish. And all of my children have already learned to love you. You have an extraordinary influence over children. What is it?"

"Mr. President, I love them."

"Sleep as long as you like. All night and all to-morrow, if you wish."

"Oh, no, Mr. President. I've a date with your boys — Joe's friends — at eight o'clock sharp. I never saw such nice refined boys in all my life. I'm proud of the United States, I love my country, but I must say that in the matter of nice, winning manners and courtesy, we can all of us sit with profit at the feet of you South Americans."

"Professor," returned the President, "I consider that, coming from you, the most delicious compliment I have ever received."

There was a table in the center of the room upon which lay a number of books. The Professor picked up one. Its title, translated, for it was in Spanish, was *The Wiles of the Jesuits.*

"A very learned work," observed the President. "By the way it is the composition of your friend Pasquale."

The Professor could not restrain a start.

"Yes," continued the President, "it is one of his best books. You see, Pasquale, as you call him, in his best days, up to the time, in fact, when he refused to abide by the results of the

election, did great work. You might say that he had devoted his life to showing the world the crafty Jesuits in their true colors."

"Oh! Oh!" exclaimed the Professor, bewilderment crossing his features and giving way to illumination.

"You are tired," said the President, puzzled by his guest's expression, "so I will leave you. Good night."

"Good night, Mr. President," and he added as the kind man left the room, "Pasquale, now I begin to understand."

CHAPTER XXII

IN WHICH THE PROFESSOR ASTOUNDS JOE AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

WHEN at noon of the next day, the Professor, flushed and smiling, returned to the mansion of the President, he was accompanied by the happiest set of boys one could wish to see.

The President himself, flanked by his wife and daughters, came out to welcome him. They were all, family and boys, to dine with the wonderful American from the States.

"Mr. President," said a lad of fourteen, stepping forward, "we boys desire to make a petition."

"I am always glad to hear petitions."

"We should like to annex Escadilla, our beloved country, to the United States of America."

"There are difficulties in the way," returned the President gravely. "It may be that they are insuperable. There will be a meeting of the cabinet this afternoon to settle a matter of great importance. At that meeting, I shall lay your petition before the members."

This satisfied the boys hugely; also when the matter was taken up it amused the cabinet members hugely.

At two o'clock, the gay youngsters departed.

Then came a short siesta, followed by a horseback ride through the country of Escadilla. In three hours, the Professor, in the delightful company of Joe and his three older sisters, all accomplished horse-women, saw much of a fertile country and learned that in the matter of sanitation and applied science Escadilla was far in advance of several of the "States."

That evening, the President, fresh from the cabinet meeting, announced, as he seated himself at the head of the table:

"We had a very important meeting, and I signed a very important document."

"Indeed," said the Professor.

"Yes; it goes into effect at once. It is to this effect. A reward of five hundred dollars will be given to any resident of our Republic who shall cause the arrest of any Jesuit, who himself must suffer the death penalty."

"Oh, I say," remonstrated the Professor, "that's going it pretty strong, isn't it? What have the Jesuits done to you?"

"They are the enemies of the human race."

"Where did you get that information?"

"Behold," announced the President, pointing to a book-case, "there are five hundred volumes and more, and every one deals with the Jesuits."

The Professor arose, walked to the case, and ran his eye over the titles.

"Mr. President," he remarked, "these books are all of them, so far as I can see, written by the enemies of the Jesuits. Many of them have been put on the index of forbidden books. Others again have been completely discredited

by modern criticism. Not one of them is a book of historical importance."

"Professor, pardon me, but have you read any of these books?"

"Some of them, yes. As to the others, I happen to know most of the charges they contain, and the pennyworth of truth in each to the pound of lies."

"But why are you such an advocate of the Jesuits?"

"Because I was educated by them," answered the Professor, resuming his seat at the table. "My mother died when I was younger than Joe, and I was sent to a Jesuit boarding-school. There I came to know and love the Jesuits. There were over two hundred boarders there, and I think I could count on my fingers the boys who, living with them in close contact, failed to love them."

"Ah, then, the Jesuits of to-day, if they can turn out a young man like you, must have changed very much from the Jesuits of the seventeenth and eighteenth century."

"Mr. President, accepting for the sake of argument your statement, why not change your law? Put the penalty of death against any Jesuit of the seventeenth and eighteenth century who dares to set foot in your Republic."

"That's what I say," chimed in Joe. "Father, what's become of Manuel?"

Manuel was the house-man of the establishment. He had slipped out of the room shortly after the President's entrance. A servant, at this moment, whispered in the President's ear.

"Manuel, my boy, so I am now told, left word that he had to go out on a matter of important business."

"Professor," whispered the boy, who insisted on sitting next to his hero, "what school did you attend when you were a boy?"

"St. Maure's College, in the State of Kansas."

"Oh, will you tell me about it?"

"I should like to very much. Perhaps, to-morrow we'll have time. Just now I want to have it out with your father on the question of the Jesuits."

The Professor, gay and smiling, but intensely earnest, returned to the attack. Joe was with him from the start. Presently, his mother came over. Of course, the girls followed their mother. The Professor grew eloquent. He actually made a speech.

"Hurrah," cried Joe at the end. "Now, Professor, I would like to meet a live Jesuit."

"That's the way to talk, Joe."

"And also, Professor, remember your promise. You promised to tell me your real name."

"Why, Joe, I thought you had forgotten all about it."

"I have been thinking of it day and night. But, Professor, when we took the boat from Belize and you gave me that little talk about there being no common people *in my sense* of the word, I — I prayed and I promised God I would ask you no more until I had changed."

Joe blushed as he spoke and lowered his eyes. He had lost much of his conceit.

"And you have changed, Joe. God has been

wonderfully good to you. You are ready now to make your first Communion; and I know that on the day you receive Our Lord, you will for that day, at least, be a saint. Now, touching my name, you have a right to know it; you ought to know it. Your father has a right. And although it may mean a new danger for me —"

A peremptory knock, loud and insistent, brought all conversation to a halt. One of the attendants opened the door, and in stepped a tall, stern-faced man in uniform. His face was the set face of one doing a desperate thing. Gazing about the room, his eyes fixed themselves on the Professor. Looking neither to right nor left, he advanced directly to the American's side, laid his hand on him, and announced gravely, distinctly,

"Sir, I arrest you in the name of the law just gone into effect for being a Jesuit and as a Jesuit entering the Republic of Escadilla."

"Good God!" exclaimed the President.

"Oh, oh!" cried the wife in an agony of grief.

Joe jumped to his feet and rudely displaced the officer's hand.

"You insulting dog," he yelled, white with rage, "to lay your hands on him. You — you —" Joe choked and finished his sentence with a magnificent gesture. It was a kick upon the officer's shins. The Professor, arising, caught Joe by the collar and lifted him into the air where he still continued to kick wildly.

"None of that, Joe," the Professor said as he set the boy down. "Play ball. This man is quite right, he is doing his duty. He has told all

of you what I was just about to tell, Joe. I am a Jesuit, an unworthy one, a scholastic of the Society of Jesus."

The Professor, for the first time since we encountered him on Canal Street in New Orleans, held his head proudly erect.

"And your name, Professor?" cried Joe, the tears dropping down his cheeks.

"Tom Playfair."

CHAPTER XXIII

IN WHICH THE PROFESSOR GETS EVERYTHING HE WANTS AND JOE SINGS OUR NATIONAL AIR

"WE have his own admission," said the officer. "It is a clear case. Mr. Playfair, you will come with me. It is also my duty —"

Here he produced a pair of handcuffs. Mr. Playfair involuntarily started back, his hands clenched. Had he followed his impulse, it would have gone hard with the Chief of Police. But his emotions were quickly crushed. Pale and smiling, he held out his hands.

"If it is your duty," he began, but got no further. With a shrill yell, Joe dashed full tilt at the officer, using feet and fists.

The President had arisen, his brow creased in an agony of thought. His wife, unnoticed tears rolling down her cheeks, sat gazing at Mr. Playfair in love and awe. The three girls, clinging to each other as if for protection, watched Mr. Playfair with parted lips. The attendants stood rigid, frowning, one or two of them furious.

"Joe, Joe," implored the Professor, at once authority and tenderness in his tones. "Play ball. This officer is right. Play the rules of the game."

Joe ceased his fierce attack. Giving Mr. Play-

fair one imploring glance, he threw himself prone on the floor. The boy would not look upon the disgrace put upon the hero who had put a new love and a new meaning into his life. But as he lay there, the heaving of his shoulders and convulsive sobs gave witness to the stress of his emotions.

Then Mr. Playfair held his hands quietly for the officer; there was a sharp click; he was handcuffed. On the instant, Mr. Playfair raised his manacled hands on high and brought them down sharply toward the officer's head. That functionary stepped back quickly, not a muscle of his countenance changing.

Mr. Playfair laughed.

"I just couldn't resist it," he exclaimed. "It was a bluff. But I must say you have courage."

"Come!" commanded the officer, laying his hand on the captive's shoulder.

"Good-by. All the same, Mr. President, I still protest. That law is unfair." And Mr. Playfair started with his captor for the door.

Then every one arose to action. The girls and their mother, weeping bitterly, threw themselves upon the President, whose face was twitching violently. They begged him to stop the unheard-of-outrage on their hospitality and gratitude. Joe sprang up and caught his professor's arm.

"If you go to jail," he said, "I go with you."

Three of the attendants, fire and fury in their eyes, barred the door. With unchanging features set in a heroic sense of duty, the officer moved onward.

"Buendia!" clear and peremptory, rang out the voice of the President; "halt!"

The officer turned and saluted.

"Take off your cap."

Again he saluted and obeyed.

"Remove those handcuffs."

The officer, winced, hesitated.

"It is the law," he objected .

"The law may be interpreted and should be. Take off those handcuffs."

Buendia shrugged his shoulders.

"Thank you," said Mr. Playfair as his hands were freed.

"Buendia," said the President, stepping up to him and removing his badge, "you are hereby removed from your office as Chief of Police."

"I am carrying out the law as I have sworn to do. May I ask, Mr. President, why I am deposed?"

"You are deposed not for carrying out the law — in that you have a perfect record — but for showing a shameful want of discretion and insulting the President of the Republic. Mr. Playfair," the President went on, "you are my prisoner. Will you give me your word of honor that you will not try to escape?"

"Thank you for trusting me, Mr. President, you have my word."

"But, father," implored Joe, "will you not set him free?"

"How can I, my boy? As Buendia has said, it is the law. Were I to free him, the cabinet itself would start a revolution."

"Father," said Joe, stepping to the middle

of the floor and holding up his right hand palm outward, "if Mr. Playfair is condemned I solemnly swear that as soon as I am old enough to do for myself, I will leave Escadilla forever."

The President gazed perplexedly at every one in the room.

"Buendia, you may go; you have abused your authority. Mr. Playfair and all here present, I beg you to pray for me that God may send me light. I will retire for a few moments to consider. I — I — am not myself."

For several minutes that house became a house of prayer.

"Quick," cried the President, returning from his room, "I want every member of the cabinet to be here within fifteen minutes."

We of the States are loath to acknowledge that a South American is ever in a hurry. There were twelve attendants on hand, when the order was issued. There were twenty-four pairs of legs scurrying, here and there and everywhere, before the order was well out of the President's mouth.

The members of the cabinet were all assembled well within the quarter of an hour. For ten minutes they debated in secret. Then Mr. Playfair was called in. For half an hour he told the assembled men of his life in and outside of the Society of Jesus.

Then he was quizzed.

"The Jesuits," said the secretary, "are accused of being sly and artful. Does not your own story prove it? Have you not traveled under a false name? Have you not imposed on the impressionable heart of an innocent boy?"

"If," interposed the President, "imposing on the impressionable heart of an innocent boy produces the astounding and gratifying result it has produced on Joe, then I say the more imposing we have of that kind, the better for the world."

"Good! Good!" cried seven of the twelve members.

"Excuse me, Mr. Playfair," continued the President graciously, "you may answer."

"It really looks bad for my case," he admitted, smiling genially at his questioner, "and I thank you for asking. When I first met Joe, I didn't tell him my name. I put it off. It was a whim. Then when I met the sick tutor and learned how set he and Joe were against the Jesuits, I felt it my duty to let him know my real name and the fact of my being a Jesuit. He was properly scandalized. It was his opinion that I should not take the boy in hand. I gave up sorrowfully; for I loved the boy. Then force of circumstances brought me into the affair again. I succeeded in getting the tutor out of the hands of the Government and in securing a passport for Joe. The tutor changed his mind, begged me to take Joe in hand, but exacted my solemn promise that I would conceal my name and profession. I insisted on one proviso, namely, that once my duty to the boy was over, I might reveal my name."

"But why," continued the questioner, "did the tutor exact that promise?"

"He knew how bitter Joe, trained by you men who ought to know better, felt toward the Jesuits; and he reckoned that if Joe knew it, he would not obey me."

"He was wrong," said the President.

"The whole thing," continued Mr. Playfair, "was distasteful to me. At Belize, I saw my Superior and told him my story. He gave me permission to see Joe through."

"He was a charitable man, may God reward him," said the President.

"But he did not think I had a right to break my promise, since I had given it. As a matter of fact, I did give my real name to one man."

"To whom?" cried several.

"To the man we know as Pasquale. After I freed him, he asked me who I was. I gave him my card. I never," here Mr. Playfair grinned, "saw any man throw such fits as he did. He didn't have much wind in his sails at the moment, but my announcement took out all that was left."

"I can well imagine," said the President, "what an effect it must have had on him. He had given his best years to abase your order. It is you, a member of that same order, who forgives and saves his life."

When Mr. Playfair left the room, there remained two men who held for his conviction.

Then came Joe. If the boy should become a lawyer, it is not likely he will ever surpass the plea he made on that occasion. One member of the cabinet wept. Many used their handkerchiefs freely. Joe won another vote for clemency.

There remained an old gentleman, with poor eyesight and bad hearing. He had never been known to change his mind or get a new idea since

he was thirty-five years of age. He was obstinate.

"I want this thing to be unanimous," said the President.

Five members of the cabinet undertook to bring the recalcitrant into line. They shouted, and they gesticulated, and, may it not be laid up against them, swore. It seemed a hopeless task.

When matters had almost came to an impasse, a messenger entered with a letter to the President, marked "Immediate and Important."

The President ran his eyes over it. As he read his face brightened.

"Listen, gentlemen," he said. "It is from Pasquale."

"Mr. President: According to my promise, I am leaving South America never to return; and also, according to my promise to the young Jesuit whom I tried not once but many times to kill, you may rest assured that Escadilla, so far as I am concerned, will never have a revolution. St. Paul was stricken by lightning from heaven. I could imagine how he felt when that young Jesuit freed me and sent me with kind words on my way. Will you show him this?

"I write this letter to let you and the men of your Republic know that the library of books on the Jesuits gives only one side — the side of their sworn enemies. I made it my business to destroy, while I was President, any book that favored them in the least. I did not want to believe anything in favor of them. I shut my eyes

to the light. My last interview with Mr. Playfair forced me into seeing that I had gone wrong in every way.

"The sin that worries me most is the poisoning of your mind against the Society of Jesus. May I beg you, as you hope for Salvation, to destroy every book of mine on the Jesuits? As for the rest of the library keep them, if you must, for reference. On reaching England, where I hope to pass the rest of my days, I will send you a number of books on the Jesuits, books that are not a conspiracy against history. If God, with whom, as Mr. Playfair will be glad to know, I have made my peace, gives me a few years more, I shall, as other enemies of the Jesuits have done, publish their history by way of retraction.

"I regret from my heart my cruelty toward your little boy. He was good enough to send me a kind message and to acquiesce in my being freed.

"Sincerely,

"VIRGIL OPORTO."

"Well," said the Secretary of State, "our old friend here can't see clearly and can't hear. Suppose he reads that letter."

The recalcitrant put on his glasses and read. At the end, he raised his head and smiled.

"I am always willing to change my mind when new evidence is offered me."

Here everybody chuckled; which, thanks to his deafness, did not offend the old man in the least.

"Gentlemen," he continued, "I am with you."

"Mr. Playfair," called the beaming President, a moment later, "you are free. The law is abolished. Jesuits when they come here will be our honored guests."

"Hear, hear!" cried the members of the cabinet in one voice as they filed into the family room.

"Furthermore, I beg in the name of the cabinet to thank you for your love and devotion. If there is any favor in our power —"

"Yes; there is, Mr. President. Restore Buendia to his office."

"What!"

"Nearly every country," explained Mr. Playfair, "has its Javert — a born policeman to whom the law is sacred. Such men have bulldog tenacity. They are incorruptible. Their one defect is that they stick too closely to the letter of the law. It is the excess of their fidelity. Now, Buendia did his duty as he saw it. Probably he will never have a case like that again. But with such a man, you may rest secure that your Republic will be kept clean, as it is to-day, of thugs and thieves and swindlers."

"You have spoken truth," said the President.

"It is as true as though you had lived with Buendia for years," added the Secretary of State.

"Buendia," announced the President, "is restored. But how did he discover your identity?"

"It was Manuel, father," put in Joe. "He had gone through Mr. Playfair's pockets when arranging his room, and found his card-case. He opened it and read 'Thomas Playfair, S. J.' Then when you announced at the supper the sign-

ing of the law against the Jesuits, he left at once and, in hope of getting the reward, denounced him to Buendia."

"He will get the reward," said the President grimly, "and something else."

"Pardon, father, he will not. The boys, my crowd, have chased him out of town; and he will never dare to come back."

"Good! And, Mr. Playfair, is there not something else?"

"Yes, Mr. President. I have a great favor to ask. In three days, I return to Belize. May I not take Joe along to enter him in the first year of high school at St. John's College? I will be his teacher."

"Oh! Oh! Father, say yes," implored Joe, clasping his hands.

"It is a joy to let him go."

Then Joe did everything that could be expected of one in blissful hysterics.

"That's not all," continued Mr. Playfair, catching Joe by the collar and smoothing him out. "You gentlemen here have sons, most of you. May I not take them all along?"

There was a roar of laughter.

"Mr. Playfair," cried the Secretary of State, "you have — what do they call it — ah, yes — you have the American cheek."

In a few minutes twelve boys, the brightest and best in the Republic, were enrolled for St. John's College, Belize, British Honduras.

Joe stepped forward, waved his finger impressively between his shoulders until all were attentive, and said:

"He has his nerve."

When the laughter had subsided, Joe raised his voice in song. His sister ran to the piano, caught the key, and accompanied him, as he sang:

"Oh, say, can you see by the dawn's early light."

And all arose and bowed their heads, as Joe, getting it right for once, sang sweetly and proudly, ending with —

"The Star-Spangled Banner for ever shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

THE END

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